



Volunteer Recruitment & Retention Toolbox

This tool box will provide our members with practical tools to recruit and retain volunteers in their clubs, counties and provinces.

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Section 1

PRE-

RECRUITMENT



GETTING STARTED

What is volunteering?

Volunteering is defined as the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of the society and community, the environment or individuals, outside of one's immediate family. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain.

What is a Volunteer?

A volunteer is someone from the community who contributes to the development of the community. They are valued as individuals who bring a unique contribution to the group with whom they work. Volunteers work for no reward other than the development of themselves and the community.

Who can volunteer?

Anyone can volunteer. It doesn't matter whether they are young, old, male, female, able bodied, disabled, employed, unemployed; there is something they can do.

Some people volunteer a few times a year when they have spare time, others give a regular commitment of several hours per week, and some even volunteer on a full time basis.

The Importance of Volunteers

Volunteers are vital to the organisation and management of every club. The time, dedication and energy they devote are of the utmost importance in keeping clubs running and working well. Without volunteers many clubs would find it difficult to function and may cease to exist. This shows volunteers are extremely valuable and deserve praise, thanks and recognition.

There are many roles that a volunteer can fulfil (e.g. administrators, coaches, officials, committee members etc.) which are all equally important. The key to success in clubs is how volunteers are managed and utilised by the people who are overlooking them.



IS YOUR CLUB VOLUNTEER FRIENDLY?

This checklist aims to give clubs a quick way to assess their volunteer-friendliness. The checklist will help you to identify areas for improvement as well as highlight things that are already working well.

Being volunteer-friendly will help your club to meet the challenges of maintaining a strong and diverse volunteer base now and into the future.

Accessibility

- Does your club have flexible volunteer hours to cater for volunteers' schedules and availability?
- Are there multiple ways for volunteers to find out more about volunteering opportunities in your club? E.g. Website, brochures, email friendly documents etc.
- Are there a number of ways for people to contact your club? E.g. phone, email, website or in writing etc.
- Is your club close to public transport or is there parking available?
- Do you have volunteering opportunities suitable for a wide range of people with different needs and interests? Consider people with a disability, young people, older people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, families as well as one-off events or short-term projects

Governance

- Are your club committees representative and inclusive of volunteer participation?
- Do you have clear and open club policies and procedures for involving volunteers?

Communication

- Is your communication open and age-friendly?
- Does the language that you use (choice of words and phrases) isolate or alienate potential groups of volunteers?
- Does your club make sure volunteers get information in a format suitable for their needs? For example in large print, on email or in a specific language
- Does your club have clear communication channels for raising and responding to volunteer issues?



Physical Environment

- Does your club have appropriate age-friendly spaces and environments?
- Does your club provide equipment and facilities appropriate to the volunteer role?

Recruitment

- Do you target your recruitment activities to particular volunteer audiences as well as a more general audience?
- Do you provide clear descriptions of the volunteer role or opportunities you are recruiting for?
- Are you strategic with your advertising?
- Do you promote the benefits of volunteering with your club?

Training

- Can you provide training/mentoring to suit a wide range of volunteer needs and skills?
- Can your training/mentoring be divided into a series of sessions or done at different times to suit different volunteers?
- Have you for current volunteers in your club willing to act as mentors?

Recognition, Rewards and Retention

- Do you offer opportunities for volunteers to stay in touch with your club or with other volunteers?
- Does your club provide social opportunities, certificates or training qualifications for your volunteers?
- Are volunteers involved in the evaluation of your volunteer opportunities? How is this taken into account?
- Do you acknowledge volunteer effort based on a wide variety of factors and not just hours?



WHY DO PEOPLE VOLUNTEER?

There are many reasons why individuals volunteer. Volunteers come from a variety of places, religions and races. Volunteers include members, friends, parents, students, volunteers already involved and volunteers that are linked to volunteer organisations. If you look at your own club who are they volunteers? People also volunteer for a variety of reasons. Some of the reasons include:

- To learn new skills
- To help other individuals
- To be involved with family and friends who are currently members
- To share abilities, knowledge and talent
- To do something other than a day job
- To make new friends
- To build up self-esteem
- To become a member of a team
- To get recognition and prestige
- To give something back to a club
- For the social aspect associated with working in a club
- To have fun!



WHERE TO FIND YOUR VOLUNTEERS?

The first thing to consider when recruiting volunteers is to have a clear understanding of what you want them to be doing. If you are organised and have a clear idea and plan (i.e. when, where and why you want help) and seek it in an organised way, people will be more willing to volunteer.

There is no set place, volunteers are everywhere. It is useful to target certain groups and areas when looking for volunteers. However it should be noted that recruitment campaigns should be distributed widely and contain clear and accurate information.

Some key issues that would be beneficial whilst recruiting are:

- Raising awareness and the importance of volunteering on your website
- Producing information sheets for your volunteers
- Use past and present member's lists. Lists of jobs/skills already recorded will give an indication of who has the necessary skills for a position
- Hold social events encouraging new members to join
- Use local press
- Organise notices on your website
- Produce flyers to be handed out at local events where potential volunteers will be
- Promotion of your club in local schools and colleges may help involve parents in volunteering
- Asking supporters of teams or the club may produce new volunteers
- Develop a partnership with a local volunteer agency to help identify volunteers. Let them know what you need and they will look through their listings for suitable matches

It is important to avoid simply saying 'volunteers needed'. Instead focus on roles and what they have to offer.



DESIGNING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The following are steps involved in designing the perfect opportunity for volunteers:

1. It is important to create a unique experience for each volunteer – you do this with flexible scheduling and project work tailored to the individual’s skill sets and preferences.
2. ‘Block the Roads to No’. Your club should have volunteer opportunities for all passions, ages and cultures from the most simple to the highly skilled and tasks that may take an hour to several months.
3. Nobody wants to get taken in by a time devouring commitment. It is important that you start off by defining the amount of the volunteer’s commitment and once they have responded you then must detail how the role will work
4. Your club should aim to attract people who want to share their talents and expertise. For instance if a person is really good at web development, let them develop a web resource that is useful to your club.
5. Make sure your volunteers are happy with what they are doing. Check in with volunteers and if the job is not a good fit then provide other opportunities for them.
6. You need to have a variety of volunteer opportunities that suit the volunteer’s interest but most important is to listen to new volunteers about what they have a passion for. Once you tap into that they will be glad to fill the volunteer role as they are also fulfilling something that they want.
7. Know exactly what you are looking for in a volunteer and have a clear role description. Be specific and know what skills are required for the role and this will help make sure the task is accomplished and the volunteer feels successful in their effort.
8. Let the volunteer know up front what is expected of them and what you will do to support them.
9. The key is to listen to why people want to volunteer and what the core of their giving of their giving nature is.
10. Ask in such a way that people can say yes. Offer choice, flexibility and meaningful involvement. Listen to volunteers and help them to meet their goals as well as those of the club so there is a win-win situation.

“If each of your existing volunteers recruited just one new volunteer, what effect would that have on your roster? You do the math!”



CREATE A RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

The responsibility of recruitment lies with the whole Club. All members should be involved and aware of the Club's recruitment strategy. Everyone working together to recruit new members will result in more success rather than leaving the recruiting in the hands of a couple of committee members.

Think about potential volunteers as consumers. There are a lot of ways motivated individuals can give their time and talents to your club. Decide what your club offers that is special and might draw in potential members. This step might include implementing a recruitment strategy.

The objective of a recruitment strategy is to examine and plan every aspect of volunteer recruitment in your club.

Format

Re-examine why you need volunteers in your club:

- How many volunteers do you need?
- What do you want them to do?
- When will you need the volunteers?
- For how long do you need them?
- What demands will be made on the volunteer?
- Who will be making these demands?
- What authority will the volunteer have?
- Who is the volunteer answerable to?
- What support is there for the new volunteer?
- Is there time available for trained volunteers to work with new volunteers?
- Will your club accept and be open to new volunteers?
- What sort of people do you want in these roles?
- What skills do they need?

Plan your recruitment strategy campaign and present it to your club committee looking for additional suggestions from members. Consider the following:

- ❖ Checking past and present membership lists
- ❖ Organise a recruitment drive using current volunteers to promote the club and its activities
- ❖ Holding 'bring a friend' social events



- ❖ Using the local newspapers – classified ads, letters, feature article etc.
- ❖ Organising a volunteer ‘pledge’ scheme among current members
- ❖ Produce specific club volunteer information kits
- ❖ Introduce a volunteer apprentice scheme for present members
- ❖ Produce fliers and send into all houses in the community
- ❖ Make a video clip/viral video about the club
- ❖ Have an information stall in local shopping centre etc.
- ❖ Offer to present information sessions at local schools and colleges
- ❖ Running community information evenings
- ❖ Talking to other groups in the area

It is also essential that you have role descriptions for all volunteer roles in your club before trying to recruit. These descriptions will need updating annually and it is advised to involve the current position holders in the review.

Recruitment Suggestions

Members

Your members are your best source of volunteers. Ask if there are family members who may like to get involved (encourage family involvement). Members may also have contacts at work or in the local area.

Former members/Participants

These are an excellent source of experience and knowledge. Often people who may be retired or semi-retired may have more time and would enjoy more club involvement.

Supporters

A valuable group of people who may not always be aware of committee roles and club needs.

Local Schools and Colleges

Students are often looking for practical experience and could welcome this opportunity.



Word of Caution

Make sure you are getting the right people!

- Resist the temptation to take everyone who contacts you. Have a selection process in place
- Plan your recruitment strategy well in advance and ensure it is ongoing
- Spread the tasks across more people to lighten the workload. Ensure roles are realistic loads for volunteers
- Be honest in your description of your club

SUMMARY

- Plan your recruitment strategy well and present it to your club committee
- All relevant information should be distributed as widely as possible
- All information should be attractively presented and be:
 - Clear
 - Concise
 - Correct
 - Courteous ('user friendly')
- Follow up any possible leads/interest shown in volunteering
- Ensure names and contact detail are clearly visible and up to date



IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Leadership has a central place in the management of volunteers, especially at a community level. It is important for clubs to identify the leadership style that will best take account of volunteer needs and provide support for leaders to develop these competencies.

Volunteers see strong leadership within a club as the way for them to focus on their roles.

Good leadership results in some or all of the following:

- Provision of a safe environment
- A well-run club
- Manageable volunteer roles
- A supportive and encouraging environment
- Clarity and certainty about the commitment required from volunteers
- Volunteers feeling respected and listened to
- Clear processes and systems for managing volunteers

Implications

- Without good leadership volunteers may be uninspired and unsure about what is expected of them and may eventually lack commitment, which will see them discontinue their volunteering
- LGFA clubs must create a motivating environment for volunteers so that volunteers can achieve their own goals as well as those of the club



ORGANISING A PARENT'S EVENING



CHECKLIST FOR RECRUITING

AND RETAINING VOLUNTEERS

Use this as a checklist and follow the steps through:

1. Decide why your club needs volunteers and what you can offer them
2. Appoint a Volunteer Coordinator
3. Work out specific roles for your volunteers
4. Decide what qualities the new volunteers will need, how many you want and for how long.
5. Write role descriptions for each specific role
6. Plan your recruitment campaign
7. Individually interview the volunteer (this can be formally or informally) and recruit people that compliment other members of the team
8. Appoint to specific positions
9. Induct the new volunteers into their new roles, providing support and feedback regularly
10. Involve volunteers in club meetings, where required, and in all matters that affect them
11. Provide opportunities for training and education
12. Manage, support and evaluate performance
13. Reward and recognise volunteers appropriately
14. Make necessary changes in roles and volunteers descriptions
15. Review these steps regularly



Volunteer Recruitment & Retention Checklist

This questionnaire will help you to gather the information necessary to review your current volunteer practices. Taking the time to complete this review will assist you to paint a clear picture of what your club is doing well and what areas you may like to spend some time on. Gathering this information will make you better placed to assess the number of volunteers required in your club and the training to be provided. Each question below will have 'GO TO' areas meaning you can Go To that section on the Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Area on our website www.ladiesgaelic.ie where further information will be available. Each section refers to a different area in volunteer recruitment and retention therefore it is important that you complete **ALL** sections for your club.

Section 1: Number of volunteers

	Yes	No
1. Do you have a full committee in your club? (Refer to Rule 108 in Official Guide)		
2. Is there a minimum of two mentors with your teams, one of which being a female?		
3. Does your club feel that you have enough volunteers for all other roles required currently?		

Findings:

- If you answered 'Yes' to all of above then you club does not require any more volunteers currently
- If you answered 'No' to any of the above questions then you need to focus on recruiting volunteers for those areas

GO TO:

- ✓ Getting Started
- ✓ Where do you find volunteers?

Section 2: Current Volunteers

On the table below please enter:

- a. Number of volunteers currently helping you and what they do?
- b. How many additional volunteers do you require and what do you need them to do?



Volunteer Role	Volunteers Confirmed	Volunteers Needed	What they do and what skills are required?

Findings:

- The above table will allow your club to identify the areas where volunteers are required and the skills needed
- If you do not need additional volunteers then your club can just focus on volunteer practices with current volunteers

GO TO:

- ✓ Where do you find volunteers?
- ✓ Designing Volunteer Opportunities in your Club?
- ✓ Create a Recruitment Strategy

Section 3: Current Volunteer Practices

This section will assess the current practices utilised in your club with volunteers currently in place. The action points for your club will be listed under each question below:

	Yes	No
<p>1. Do you know why your volunteers choose to volunteer?</p> <p><i>If no, it is important to find this out to assist you to attract new volunteers.</i></p> <p>GO TO: Why do people volunteer?</p>		
<p>2. Do you have policies or guidelines around engaging and involving volunteers?</p> <p><i>If no, it is essential that you create these and ensure all volunteers aware of same.</i></p> <p>GO TO: Is your club volunteer friendly?/ Screening your volunteers</p>		



<p>3. Does your club have places where they find volunteers currently or do they know where they all come from?</p> <p><i>If no, it is important that your club is aware of where the volunteers are being attracted from and who are the most likely to volunteer.</i></p> <p>GO TO: Create a recruitment strategy/ Engaging volunteers</p>		
<p>4. Is there a person/people responsible for recruitment and support of volunteers?</p> <p><i>If no, it can be hugely beneficial to appoint a Volunteer Coordinator in your club</i></p> <p>GO TO: Role of a Volunteer Coordinator</p>		
<p>5. Has your club clear role descriptions for all your volunteers?</p> <p><i>If no, the club should provide role descriptions to all their volunteers to ensure clarity on what is expected of each volunteer</i></p> <p>GO TO: Creating job descriptions</p>		

Section 4: Volunteer Recruitment

This section will assess how your club promotes volunteer positions and practices in place to recruit new volunteers. The action points for your club will be listed under each question below:

	Yes	No
<p>1. Has your club a practice in place for promoting and advertising the need for new volunteers?</p> <p><i>If no, it is important to ensure everyone in your area is aware that your club requires assistance regardless of the role.</i></p> <p>GO TO: Organise a parent's evening/ benefits for potential volunteers/ engaging with volunteers/ The importance of asking/ promotion of volunteer roles/ create a recruitment strategy</p>		
<p>2. Does your club have a process in place to introduce new volunteers to the club?</p> <p><i>If no, it is essential that all volunteers are inducted into your and made aware of the support available.</i></p> <p>GO TO: Induction to your club/ creating job descriptions/ screening your volunteers</p>		



Section 5: Volunteer Retention

This section will assess how your club currently retains volunteers and practices required to put in place. The action points for your club will be listed under each question below:

	Yes	No
<p>1. Has your club a database of all volunteer details?</p> <p><i>If no, this is essential to ensure you can keep all volunteers up to date on activities.</i></p> <p>GO TO: Creating a database of volunteers</p>		
<p>2. Does your club offer any training opportunities to your volunteers?</p> <p><i>If no, it is important that your volunteers feel valued and part of this is up-skilling them in areas required.</i></p> <p>GO TO: Management of volunteers/ Training and development of volunteers/ mentoring training</p>		
<p>3. Has your club regular communication with all their volunteers?</p> <p><i>If no, all volunteers should be kept up to date with all activities taking place in your club on a regular basis and it is also important to communicate with regards to their roles</i></p> <p>GO TO: Importance of Communication</p>		

Section 6: Recognition of Volunteers

This section will assess how your club currently recognises and rewards your volunteers. The action points for your club will be listed under each question below:

	Yes	No
<p>1. Does your club have a Volunteer Appreciation Plan?</p> <p><i>If no, it is important that your club has a plan in place to thank all volunteers.</i></p> <p>GO TO: Volunteer Appreciation Plan/ Recognising and Rewarding Your Volunteers/ Importance of thanking your volunteers/ Holding a volunteer appreciation night</p>		
<p>2. Has your club a succession plan in place for volunteers?</p> <p><i>If no, new volunteers will come into your club but existing volunteers will also leave therefore it is important to put a plan in place of what will happen when this occurs</i></p> <p>GO TO: Succession Planning</p>		



Congratulations you have now completed your Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Checklist!

Please list below the sections requiring attention from the checklist completed:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Any additional comments:





Section 2

RECRUITMENT



TYPES OF VOLUNTEERS

There are eight different types of volunteers identified through research and they have all different motivations associated with them. An overview and key points relating to managing volunteers with the particular motivation are outlined.

Investors

- These are volunteers who are willing to give their time so others, or their sport, will achieve and be successful
- Investors have been so named because they want to act as a catalyst for positive change in others and spend their time so that others may achieve physically, emotionally and socially
- Investors want to be recognised for having contributed to a successful outcome
- They are looking for results from their volunteering and are looking for the volunteer environment to help achieve these results
- They are the type of people who want to use their time and skills productively and efficiently and value the good use of their time to enhance the performance of others
- These people want to get back what they have put into helping others. They seek acknowledgement for the time and effort they have put in

Key Implications

- The investor mindset appears to be a key one, and often sits alongside other motivations or barriers people hold for sport volunteering
- For this reason, providing volunteers with a sense of achievement will help to position volunteering more positively
- Investors rate achievement and making a difference highly and they want to see and experience the results of their 'investment'
- The volunteer experience for these people can be increased by ensuring that achievements are made explicit. Clubs should acknowledge in all forms of communication exactly what has been achieved because of volunteers, from the small to the large, from new skills learnt, to wins achieved by a team, to the number of new players attracted to a team



- Sport clubs can reinforce the volunteer experience by placing importance on their volunteers' time and investment and explicitly acknowledging just how valuable they are to the club. Clubs should ensure processes and practices are developed that respect and protect the value of Investors' input, such as ensuring there are codes of conduct for players and spectators that advocate respect for Investors' time and efforts

Aspirers

- Aspirers are volunteers who have a drive to obtain a level of respect and prestige
- These volunteers need to feel important, recognised and appreciated, and enjoy other people looking up to them
- Aspirers may see volunteering as an opportunity to obtain recognition and achievement, possibly more so than in other areas of their lives
- Aspirers often strive to reach a high level of status in volunteering (e.g. coach or referee) because of the large amount of skill and achievement that are associated with these positions

Key Implications

- It is important that Aspirers get visible expressions of appreciation and that their contribution is valued. Prizes could be presented to these volunteers in front of others
- Often the greatest rewards and recognition for Aspirers are from peers and those higher up
- Providing a sense of a volunteer career pathway and career planning helps Aspirers to know where volunteering can take them

Masters

- Masters want to influence others through transferring their knowledge and passing on their skills
- Masters want to control their environment and invest in their personal identify. These people consider themselves to be experienced and knowledgeable and expect others to turn to them for advice
- Masters appear willing and confident to take on responsibilities, especially in higher level roles



- ‘Mastery’ in the context of sport volunteering is used to mean having particular skills to shape the infrastructure of sports clubs

Key Implications

- Some Masters are not sure of how to apply their skills to sport volunteering. It needs to be made explicit to people exactly what skills the club is looking for. This may activate the Master in people who were otherwise inactive
- Masters like to improve organisation and efficiency, so will probably respond positively to codes of practice for players and parents. Guidelines, policies and practice for volunteering are also well received by Masters
- Masters are also ideal for testimonials on websites, with particular attention being paid to their skills and how you club utilised these skills
- Acknowledging Masters will increase the likelihood of their continued commitment to volunteering and will make the roles Masters carry out more attractive to others.

Skill Seekers

- Skill Seekers are looking for opportunities for skill development and increase knowledge. This can involve organisational skills, personal development, interpersonal skills and technical skills
- This mindset fits with many young people and those with career aspirations
- Having access to a mentor for Skill Seekers is seen as ideal because this provides them with guidance and a person to communicate their needs to

Key Implications

- We need to give people the opportunity to understand what potential skills they can learn through sport volunteering and give them the option to use volunteering this way
- However, because of its self-focused nature, it is critical that skill seeking is not positioned as the primary goal for sport volunteering
- People recruited on the basis of a focus on skill development may only have a shallow commitment to sport volunteering and may not return the investment made in them. This may undermine the integrity of the commitment volunteering requires
- Mentoring programmes need to be a priority because of the level of skill development that can occur



- Skill Seekers benefit from knowing how to leverage and transfer their skills for paid employment. This can be carried out by mapping out a 'volunteering career path' so people can see what skills can be obtained as they progress as a volunteer.

Cautious but Keen

- Many potential volunteers lack confidence in their ability to undertake sport volunteering. The people in this Cautious but Keen segment are keen on the idea of volunteering, but cautious because they are full of self-doubts about their abilities
- This anxiety in a group, club or organisational setting means people are unlikely to put themselves forward. A key factor in deterring Cautious but Keen people from volunteering is their perception of their lack of credibility with a team of players
- Cautious but Keen people perceive sport volunteering to be about a large amount of responsibility, no support and no financial benefits. Many believe they will get overloaded and many are young people who are needing to build their life skills

Key Implications

- There needs to be active management of pathways into volunteering. People need to feel free to take risks and try things out, but with safety nets in place.

Strategies to build confidence that could be considered are:

- Compulsory volunteering
- Mentoring and Support in Roles
- Training and skill development, especially in working with groups and managing others
- Providing a psychologically safe volunteering environment by being really clear about what the role requires and what the responsibilities are



Time Poor

- The Time Poor segment will contain volunteers with multiple demands on their time, who resolve this conflict by limiting how they spend their time
- These people are cautious about committing to sport volunteering and would seek clarity about the exact nature of the time commitment before volunteering
- Time Poor people are looking for lower risk commitments in shorter time blocks, perhaps with shared responsibility within a role
- People in this segment look to sport organisations to provide a high level of structure so they can put boundaries around volunteering

Key Implications

- Time Poor people may be persuaded to volunteer if they are able to meet their time commitments
- It is important to build certainty over time commitments and roles by communicating the efficiencies in the club
- Organisations should inform people about volunteer roles that require a small amount of commitment and time. This could partially overcome the negative image of volunteering as a time-intensive activity
- Creating less time-intensive entry level roles and positions will leave people open to other possibilities and create confidence in their ability to integrate the role with their other responsibilities
- Clubs need to consider keeping volunteer roles highly structured so that volunteers are not overburdened
- Volunteers should be given the option to share their role responsibilities with someone else
- Clubs should keep potential and lapsed volunteers informed about volunteer roles via newsletters while acknowledging that volunteering is not possible for some people in some situations



My Time

- My Time people have made a conscious decision to spend their time freely in ways other than volunteering. These people may have volunteered previously for a number of years and now sport volunteering does not fit with their lives
- Lapsed volunteers in this segment often planned their exit from volunteering (e.g. retirement), especially when they were involved in a volunteer position with a large amount of responsibility. Potential volunteers in this segment were often postponing volunteering so they could spend time in other ways (e.g. for youth socialising or studying)

Key Implications

The My Time segment is rather difficult to encourage into volunteering because of their conscious decision to use their spare time in ways other than volunteering; however, the following strategies may persuade some My Time people that their time may be best spent volunteering:

- Acknowledging those people who have volunteered extensively before and their need for a break from volunteering
- Making a link, for those older My Time volunteers who have not volunteered before, to their grandchildren who are playing sport.
- Focusing on the value of the experience and wisdom of older My Time volunteers and the need for them to pass this on to younger generations
- Targeting those people who would consider volunteering in the future, especially young potential volunteers by providing them with information that gets sport volunteering on the radar
- Informing young My Time volunteers of the options available to them in terms of the different sport volunteering roles
- Emphasising the fun and social aspects of sport volunteering
- Emphasising the value of sport volunteering in terms of skills development, investing in other people and achievement



Frustrated Defectors

- People accept that when they are volunteering they are in a different context from the paid workforce. Overall it has been found that people show high levels of goodwill to clubs, but for many there are high expectations around organisational management and efficiencies
- Frustrated Defectors appear worn down by the negative aspects of volunteering within a club. These people are frustrated from participating in a group or club and are looking for more engagement, involvement and autonomy from the club
- Frustrated Defectors look for opportunities to strengthen their relationship with volunteering and are looking for more respect and inclusion overall
- Frustrations arise in many areas, from being taken for granted, to organisational politics and agendas. These people feel that communication channels are not effective and that they have a lack of voice and influence
- There are feelings of a lack of respect for them as a volunteer and that volunteers are not treated as well as they should be. This often comes from workloads being too heavy and from treatment by spectators involved in the sport

Key Implications

- Clubs need to be capable of developing a relationship with their volunteers and of increasing their satisfaction with volunteering
- Clubs could consider creating a safer (psychological, emotional, physical) environment for their volunteers
- Mentoring into roles with a senior person always available greatly helps the culture of a club, because volunteers would know they have support when it is needed and more senior volunteers are able to feel valued
- Having an advocate for volunteers and information sessions for new volunteers increases the likelihood of a smooth transition into volunteering



BENEFITS FOR POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS

Volunteering can provide many benefits to individuals, clubs and the community as a whole. Because people volunteer for different reasons, it is important to outline the benefits your club can offer volunteers. Doing so will help your club attract volunteers and give you a clear understanding of their needs.

To best 'sell' what your club can offer volunteers, ask your current volunteers how they have benefited from their experience. Then use this information to promote volunteering in your club.

Potential Benefits of Volunteering for a Club

- parents and children spend time together
- make new friends and have fun
- access to free training and resources
- learn and share new skills
- increase knowledge and improve skills
- make a contribution
- take on new challenges
- explore a career
- earn academic credit
- expand personal experiences
- set a good example for kids
- help reduce costs for members
- become part of a community and/or be a part of a team
- maintain fitness
- opportunities for recognition
- re-live childhood sporting memories

How to Use this Information to Attract New Volunteers

- Promote benefits in flyers and websites, which the Volunteer Coordinator can refer to when talking to potential volunteers.
- Promote benefits in advertisements for volunteering opportunities.
- Produce a brochure listing the benefits of volunteering for your club.
- Write media articles highlighting the benefits of volunteering in your club.
- Post YouTube clips of existing members talking about the benefits of volunteering in your club (put on your website, Facebook, etc.).



ENGAGING OLDER VOLUNTEERS

There are a huge number of older or retired people available on our communities and it is essential that we tap into these people as future volunteers in our clubs. This information sheet will provide you with some tips on engaging with older people in your area.

Why Involve Older Volunteers in Your Club?

- Older volunteers bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to your organisation. These volunteers could be looking for activities to be involved in prior or after their retirement or enhancing their skills to look for employment
- Older volunteers are more likely to give their time regularly and consistently and remain committed to the club
- People who have retired are always looking for ways to participate in their communities
- Older people are particularly interested in using their existing skills and experience to contribute to the community

As well as the experience the older volunteers bring to your club they may also gain benefits themselves. Promoting these benefits during recruitment is a great way to engage with volunteers.

Benefits Gained by the Older Volunteers

- Volunteering boosts happiness. Numerous studies that have investigated the link between volunteering and mental health have found the sense of personal accomplishment gained from volunteering has a positive effect, particular for older volunteers
- Volunteers report fewer symptoms of anxiety and depression and a higher level of satisfaction with their lives
- Volunteers can maintain their interests and support the club and sport they are passionate about



Why do Older People get Involved in Volunteering?

- Help others in the community
- Gain personal satisfaction and enjoyment
- Obtain training and additional employment-related skills
- Moving from work to retirement
- Obtaining new skills and gaining new experiences
- Meeting new friends and remaining active in the community

What can Your Club do to Attract Older Volunteers?

- Ensure that your policies and procedures are fair and open to all people
- Be as adaptable as possible. Offer flexible options to fit in with the volunteer's lifestyle
- Match the volunteer's skills with the volunteering opportunity. This will be rewarding for both the volunteer and the club
- Provide opportunities for older volunteers to pass on their professional skills through teaching, coaching and mentoring. This will also assist with the retention of volunteers

Tips for Attracting and Retaining Older Volunteers

- Word of mouth is the most common method of recruiting older volunteers
- Consider new avenues for finding older volunteers such as local groups, social clubs, newspapers and radio
- Be available to talk face to face as not all people will have access to a computer or the internet.
- Ask your older volunteers to help evaluate any club programmes to assist you to improve and develop as they are a valuable resource
- Emphasise the opportunity to meet new people as well as assisting in the community. Volunteering is a good way to develop new social networks, which is particularly important to people who may be making the transition to retirement



ENGAGING YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

There are a huge number of young people available on our communities and it is essential that we tap into these young people as future volunteers in our clubs. This information sheet will provide you with some tips on engaging with young people in your area.

Who are they?

Young people are generally defined as being between 12 and 25 years of age.

Why Involve Young People in Your Club?

Young people can bring enthusiasm, energy, creativity, a fresh set of eyes and flexibility to a club. These young volunteers can add value to your club by bringing a youth perspective through new ideas, theories and knowledge. They will also help bridge the gap between generations.

Engaging with young people also allows your club to plan for the future and help to prevent your volunteer base from sinking over time, as the aging of your population begins to affect the ways in which people volunteer.

Having young people in your club contributes to the future of volunteering and the community – people who start volunteering early tend to continue to volunteer for the rest of their lives. If your club is planning for the future and developing a succession plan, clubs need to seriously consider engaging young volunteers in the management and day-to-day operations of your club.

Why do Young People Get Involved?

Young people want to volunteer. Research shows the main reasons include:

- To reach out and really make a difference to others
- To obtain new skills, particularly ones that can be included on a CV or demonstrate experience in a particular field
- To have fun and meet new people



Why Changes Can Your Club Make?

It is important for your club to accept young volunteers on an equal basis. The following changes will make your organisation more appealing to young people:

- Be more flexible. Can your working practices be updated to accommodate young people? Can they get involved at times that suit them?
- Ensure that policies and practices are not discriminatory. Can you ensure there are no age limits for activities and roles in the club?
- Reassess where you require volunteers with young people in mind. How would roles change if young people were involved? How could they be done differently? Do you have any specific projects/roles that target young people?
- Don't assume that young people can or can't do – think of what they could achieve if they had adequate support and mentoring. Do you have young people in decision-making roles? How could you include them effectively? Think about how you can use their knowledge and life experience
- Listen to what young people have to say and help them build upon their ideas. Get them involved behind the scenes first so that they can begin absorbing the information necessary to take up the reins in the future

Tips for Finding and Keeping Young Volunteers

- Be strategic with your advertising:
 - Identify the benefits associated with your volunteering opportunity – it may be a reference, something to add to their CV or learning new skills
 - Use youth friendly language – 'marketing experience' rather than fund raising'
 - Think about where you look for young volunteers
 - Could you find new places to advertise? – colleges, youth clubs etc.
 - Talk to local schools and colleges – they often look for volunteering opportunities for students
- Make it easy for young people to get involved and be flexible about the timing of their involvement – remember many young people have jobs or study so may need to adjust their volunteering hours
- Look for a shorter commitment from young people such as a fund raising project – easier to commit to project based tasks
- Get your young people to help evaluate your programs to allow you to improve and develop
- Acknowledge your volunteers – people do not know they are doing a good job unless you tell them!



ENGAGING WITH DIVERSE CULTURES

For migrants who have arrived in Ireland volunteering can be a great way to learn about the community they live in. Volunteering can help migrants – new or established in the community – to make connections as they settle into their new home.

The Benefits of Volunteering

Volunteering is ideal for helping migrants, from diverse cultures, connect with their community. Not only does volunteering provide a basis for people to make new friendships, share their skills and help people in need, it also provides an opportunity for migrants to:

- Gain experience within the Irish community
- Develop community knowledge and social connections
- Develop language skills
- Source local referees and support networks
- Make contacts for future employment opportunities

Ways to Volunteer

It is important that clubs create opportunities to get migrants involved in volunteering. These opportunities can range from administration to mentoring etc. An important element of this volunteering opportunity will be the support provided by people in the existing roles. Migrants may find it easiest to volunteer with groups they already have an association with such as places of worship or sports groups they had an affiliation with. Gaelic games may be a new interest so it is important to make this an easy transition.

Who can Volunteer?

Everyone has a unique set of skills to offer. Opportunities are available for everyone whatever their situation – whether they possess limited English/irish skills. It is imperative to find the best fit between the volunteer and the club to ensure a mutually beneficial relationship. These new volunteers can also encourage more people from the diverse cultures to become involved in your club.



Recruiting Volunteers from Diverse Cultures

Recruiting people from diverse cultural and language backgrounds can make your club more representative of your community. Tips for recruiting:

- Research your local demographics. Your local council may be able to assist
- Talk to your council and local migrant organisations about local cultural community groups and ask for their assistance to build relationships
- Seek advice from cultural community leaders about how to recruit volunteers
- Customise recruitment strategies to specific cultural groups as one size does not fit all
- Face to face communication is the most effective way of distributing information. Offer to run an information session about your club
- Advertise volunteer opportunities in local ethnic community newspapers, newsletters etc.
- Provide extra support initially for volunteers e.g. a mentor or buddy system
- Promote what your club can offer volunteers e.g. work experience, practice English conversation or make new friends

Inclusive Club Practices

All of your club's policies and procedures should be inclusive of diversity. Be sure to:

- Be welcoming and make the person feel comfortable as volunteering may be a big step for them
- Include lots of face to face communication at induction
- Address problems with language and cultural knowledge that might make it hard for the volunteer to do their job
- Ensure stereotyping and discrimination have no place in your club
- Recognise and reward volunteers in culturally acceptable and meaningful ways

What are the Challenges?

Some people have a high level of English reading and writing ability however their conversational English makes it difficult for them to perform some roles. However many of these people may be highly qualified in IT or other roles that may assist in your club. Do not let challenges stop you from encouraging people from diverse cultures to get involved in your club. Try to find a role they are interested in. People enjoy volunteering by doing things they love to do, and the new skills and experiences they gain will only serve to broaden their



abilities, network and confidence. Remember these volunteers and their families can be future members of your club!

Tips for Communicating and Overcoming Language Barriers:

- Use simple English
- Give instructions in a clear sequence
- Avoid too much indirectness
- Allow time for people to process information, especially concepts
- Avoid figurative language e.g. “take a seat”, “hold on”, “see you later”
- Back up verbal instructions with a demonstration or written information if appropriate
- Remember some people may speak English well but not be able to read and write and vice versa
- Ensure understanding by asking the person to repeat the message
- Understand that some people are hesitant to ask too many questions in case they are seen as being impolite. Try and confirm the volunteer’s understanding by seeking verbal acknowledgement

Managing Unfamiliar Accents

Sometimes a speaker’s unfamiliar accent can make them difficult to understand. When communicating:

- Encourage the person to talk for a while so you can pick up on any words, pattern or rhythm
- Explain that you are not familiar with their accent and ask if they could speak more slowly
- Slow your own speech and speak clearly



ENCOURAGING FAMILY VOLUNTEERING

Family volunteering creates opportunities for parents, children and other family members to spend time together contributing to the community and club they care about. It is a great way for families to enjoy quality time with each other. Family volunteering also introduces family members to the benefits of volunteering. It is a fact that people who volunteer when they are young are more likely to volunteer throughout their adult life. Family volunteering can be a practical way to express values to children and young people. Volunteering provides parents/guardians and other family members the opportunity to be a positive role model by demonstrating how to be involved with the community, how to make a difference and also enjoy it. Volunteering in a family group can improve communication among family members, strengthen family bonds and be a lot of fun.

Why Involve Families as Volunteers in Your Club?

- Family volunteers grows future generations of volunteers
- Family volunteering provides access to a larger pool of volunteers
- People who volunteer as a family are more likely to volunteer more frequently
- Volunteers can be more reliable as individuals commit as a family group
- Volunteers have greater commitment as their volunteering and family interests are competing less for time
- Family volunteers can be valuable for events and seasonal activities e.g. Christmas parties etc.
- Family volunteering provides greater potential for long-term retention of volunteers
- Family volunteers can help your club develop stronger ties to all of the community
- Family volunteering provides opportunities for intergenerational learning

Benefits of Family Volunteering for Families Include:

- A shared sense of accomplishment and satisfaction from giving back to the club
- Experience a stronger sense of community and feeling less isolated
- Helping families learn about their local club and community
- Creating family memories
- Learning new skills or building on existing skills
- Building self confidence in family members



Successful Family Volunteering Activities are:

- Fun, active and hands-on
- Flexible with a range of activities, times and locations
- Able to include a range of experience and age groups
- Inclusive of children, with learning opportunities
- Able to be shared with other families

Some Examples of Family Volunteering Include:

- Festivals and events
- Fundraising activities
- Club nurseries
- Club facilities development – tree planting, painting etc.
- Recycling projects
- Junior committees
- Gear recycling – boots etc.
- Christmas club community day – visit to families, nursing homes etc.
- General club activities

How to Attract and Retain Family Volunteers

- Promote the fact that your club welcomes families as volunteers
- Be flexible and consider the volunteer opportunities you are providing
- Allow for participation by younger and older people and groups. Can the work be shared for some of these volunteering opportunities?
- Provide opportunities for children to take part as this will encourage their parents/guardians to become involved as volunteers



Finding Family Volunteers

- Be strategic with your advertising. Consider local school newsletters, community magazines, mass bulletins, local community groups and childcare centres
- Ask your existing volunteers to bring their families along. Ask prospective volunteers if they are interested in volunteering with their families
- Emphasise how your opportunity enables families to spend quality time together as well as making a difference to the club and community
- Promote a volunteer project as a 'Family Volunteer Day'. Limiting the initial involvement to a single day can be a good way for families to try out volunteering and ensure that this is a positive experience



INVOLVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AS VOLUNTEERS

People with a disability have abilities, skills and experiences that can be valuable to your club. Many are looking for flexible and accessible volunteering opportunities in organisations that recognise their capabilities, not their disabilities. This information sheet provides ideas and tips for clubs to tap into this group of potential volunteers. Involving people with a disability in your club will benefit you and your community.

Who are they?

While the number of people with a disability who volunteer and how and where they volunteer is unknown, an increasing number of people with a disability are looking for ways to engage with their communities and local clubs and become more socially active.

A disability could include:

- A visual or hearing problem
- A physical disability
- Mental health issues
- An intellectual disability
- An acquired brain injury
- An illness or disease
- A learning difficulty

Why Involve People With a Disability in Your Club?

People with a disability are active and prominent in many fields including arts, media and educations and can be equally prominent in sport. They bring to their work personal and professional qualities and skills, shaped by their own unique life experiences.

The benefits your club may experience from including people with a disability as volunteers include:

- Access to a larger pool of volunteers
- A more diverse group of volunteers that will offer a wider range of skills, experience and motivation
- A volunteer team that reflects the diversity of the larger community
- Improved understanding of diversity and inclusive practice among all your members



Why do People with a Disability Get Involved?

People with a disability volunteer for many reasons including:

- Helping others or making a contribution
- Meeting people and making friends
- Learning new skills and developing new interests
- Feeling part of the club and community
- Enjoyment

Why Changes Can Your Club Make?

The following changes will help your club become more volunteer-friendly and accessible to people with volunteers:

- Create an inclusive environment – think about running disability awareness training and improving physical access
- Concentrate on ability rather than disability. Don't assume what people can or can't do
- Think of what people could achieve if they had adequate support and mentoring
- Listen to the volunteers – they understand best how to manage their impairment
- Reassess your volunteer opportunities – how might they change if people with a disability were involved? How could they be done differently?
- Make sure volunteers feel part of the team. Address any negative attitudes towards disability
- Ensure policies and practices are not discriminatory

Tips for Attracting People with a Disability

Following these tips will help your club attract people with a disability:

- Build relationships and partnerships with community groups that involve people with a disability
- Promote volunteering in ways that include people with a disability. Mention that everyone is welcome as a volunteer
- Ensure recruitment processes are user-friendly – have someone willing and able to help people fill out volunteer recruitment forms etc.
- Be clear and consistent about the volunteer's role and responsibility to the club. However be prepared to have some flexibility around role descriptions
- Match the 'role to the volunteer' rather than the 'volunteer to the role'



THE IMPORTANCE OF ASKING

How many of you feel like you have enough volunteers in your club? There are very little clubs that will say they have. Almost no club will feel like they have enough volunteers, a popular discussion when committees get together is sharing ideas to help persuade/recruit/guilt-trip/trick/entice folks to join their club. I'd like to share with you the world's easiest way to get new volunteers: JUST ASK!! Ask, ask, ask. And when you get rejected, ask again or ask somebody else.

'Ask'

Flyers and adverts are fine, but not as good as an 'ask'. Who should you ask? Everybody. If there is anybody in the community who has an interest or could develop an interest in your club, ask. Who should do the asking? You, your current volunteers, your members. Believe it or not, the most effective asks usually come not from the "chairperson", but from the "satisfied customers" (current volunteers). When a current volunteer tells a peer that volunteering in the club is rewarding and worth the time commitment, it makes a powerful statement.

Don't Say Somebody Else's "No."

Don't say somebody else's "no." Too often we assume somebody is too busy, uninterested etc. so we say "no" on their behalf without ever actually asking them to volunteer. Don't assume. Don't say somebody else's "no." There are probably more people in your community willing to work with your club than you think. You just have to ask!

Remove Barriers to Saying "Yes"

It is also important to remember that many potential volunteers feel that the only roles available may be in coaching with your teams and they do not have the skillset for this. It is essential to put people at ease and let them know that there are many roles available and that their skills can be hugely beneficial to the club in many capacities. Do not leave an obvious barrier to allow people to say 'No'.



IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

- How many volunteers are needed?
- How long will they be needed?
- When will they be needed?
- What will they be doing?
- What will they be asked to do?
- How much responsibility will they have?
- Who will be in charge of the volunteers?
- What training and support will be available to the volunteers?
- What skills do they need to fill the role?
- Where is the right place to find the volunteers?
- Are there partners within my local community that already have volunteers that the club can use?



PROMOTION OF VOLUNTEER ROLES **INCLUDING USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Your club will usually produce leaflets, posters or adverts to recruit volunteers, and using these in a wide range of local settings will help your club to reach a broader audience. You might already have advertised in lots of public and community clubs and centres in your area, but have you tried social media. There's a good reason everyone's talking about Social Media. The "Social" aspect means this is an easy way to keep in touch with members from your club.

What are the Options for Social Media?

One of the best ways to tap Social Media is to create a free **Facebook group** for your club, then invite all your members to join it and use it to make announcements, called 'posts', and receive 'comments' back.

Facebook is one of the easier, more popular mediums to cover all age ranges in your club.

In addition to Facebook, some keen clubs might have a Twitter account run by volunteers to send reminders and help their teenage and younger members feel connected.

Pinterest and Instagram are popular if your club has photos of club activity to share. Instagram is particularly popular among younger people.

"Google Plus" is a new variation of Facebook. In 2013 more of your club members are likely to be found on Facebook, however this may change in years to come. Google Plus is an option to add if you want the strongest club presence in all social media platforms.

How Much Time is Required?

Social Media can be very time consuming. Ideally you might have trusted volunteers appointed to manage your social media, but with one key person as an 'admin' so the club have control if and when they need it.

Social Media is a busy, instant, public forum. Everything happens **now!**



Whoever is managing your social media will need to keep your posts fresh and relevant and constantly monitor to support positive comments and take action to nip any negative problems in the bud - potentially at odd times during the week. Like a good Public Relations (PR) person, they will also need to respond carefully and positively to questions and direct messages. You might consider having one volunteer to manage most of the posts and another mature, experienced volunteer to respond to challenging queries as they arise.

The more social platforms you open up, the more time will be needed to manage them all.

If limited time is available across your volunteer team, then **Facebook alone** might be your best strategy.

When you have resources to go beyond this, your volunteers might consider the other options above such as Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest and Google Plus.

Open versus Closed Facebook 'Groups'

Before you create a group on Facebook for your club, it is helpful to understand the difference between 'Open' and 'Closed' groups.

When you or any group member 'Posts' an announcement, 'Likes' something or makes a 'Comment' on your group page, that activity will be seen by everyone else in the group. With a 'Closed' group, that is all that happens - only the group members can see the activity.

With an 'Open' group, **all of the friends** connected to each group member can also see the group's activity, announcements etc. Open groups are your best choice if you will use Facebook to Find and Induct Volunteers and to make general announcements. The Open nature means many more people are likely to see your announcements and take interest in the club.

Closed groups are best if you want to share partially sensitive information only with club staff or members, or if you want to provide a safer 'members only' forum for club members to discuss topics without prying eyes. A good strategy might be to create an Open group to advertise your club and then use direct email to keep in touch with volunteers and members for private information.



Social Media is Not Always Safe with Sensitive Information

Whether you create an Open or Closed group, be aware Facebook reserves the right to change rules without warning. In addition you or club members might accidentally share private information wider than you intend to, if unfamiliar with the various privacy settings throughout Facebook. In addition, sometimes unauthorised people can access an account that is not theirs if someone uses a password that is too easy to guess or they forget to logout on a computer shared by others.

For these reasons it is good practice to use Social Media mostly to promote your open, public information and use more secure means for private information. When information is particularly sensitive, a phone call or private face-to-face chat can be the safest and most thoughtful way to discuss it.

Age Restrictions

Each Social Media platform has their own age restrictions. For example Facebook requires a minimum age of 13 as at 1/11/2013. Be sure to check and advise your members.

How to Create a Facebook Group

Facebook has instructions on creating a group at <https://www.facebook.com/help/162866443847527/>

Find Volunteers Through Facebook

Under 'Open versus Closed Facebook Groups' above we have highlighted that the posts in an *Open* Facebook group can be seen not just by your existing club members, but also by all the Facebook *friends* of your club members. If you have 100 members in your Facebook group and they each have 100 Facebook friends, this means your announcements might be seen by up to 10,000 people. The friends of existing club members can be ideal candidates to become volunteers.

The following actions will help you draw them in;

- The more popular your posts or photos are, the more likely Facebook will put them at the top of the 'news feed' of the friends that are directly or indirectly connected to your group.



- When posting, if you don't have a public phone number for your club, you can direct people to 'message' your group with their own contact details if interested. In this way you keep your personal email address or phone number private. When receiving enquiries you can look at their Facebook wall and their Facebook friends to get a sense of who they are, and who they might know prior to contacting them.

Keeping Them

Social Media is a great way for people to share the positive, interesting things that are going on in their lives. Posting vibrant photos and announcements of fun club activities, including photos that include many of your club members and volunteers over time, can be an effective way to keep members feeling good about their involvement in the club and help them share what's going on with their friends and peers. If your clubs looks like a healthy and fun group, this can make current volunteers feel proud and encourage others to join in.

Tagging photos and thanking people publicly on social media can be an easy, ongoing way to show your thanks and help your volunteers feel appreciated and wanting to come back for more.

'Tagging' a photo is where you click a person's face in a photo and enter their name. If that person is connected to your Facebook group, Facebook will highlight their name and link to that person's Facebook account so they know they have been 'tagged'. That person's friends will then see the photo they were tagged in. If you include a Thank You message in the photo description, the person's friends will see the contribution they've made and how much their efforts were appreciated.

For more on uploading and tagging photos, see
<https://www.facebook.com/help/118731871603814/> for uploading and
<https://www.facebook.com/help/463455293673370/> for tagging.

Make sure you obtain permission from club members before posting any photo or personal details about them. Getting everyone to sign a social media permission form as they join your club is an easy way to manage this.

Supporting Your Volunteers

Many of the tips above in "Keep" apply equally well to Backing your volunteers.

Using Social Media to broadcast a steady stream of positive, interesting photos of club members and volunteers having fun and being appreciated will make your volunteers feel valued and wanting to keep up their club involvement.



In addition, if people make negative comments on social media about one of your volunteers, be very quick to step in and smooth the situation. In particular look to defend and paint your volunteers in a good light wherever appropriate. Praising their efforts regularly is a proactive way to Support them and social media is one of the easiest, most appropriate forums in which to do so.

In addition, be sure to pass on positive comments and feedback to your volunteers that you receive on social media. Also if you receive comments, ideas and suggestions from your members or volunteers, be quick to acknowledge their thoughts and let them know how soon their ideas will be discussed and considered by your club committee.

4 C's of Social Media's Role in Volunteer Recruitment

- Communicate
- Coordinate
- Celebrate
- Connect



CREATING ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

There are numerous roles that volunteers can fulfil. Sometimes volunteers are recruited into an area where they do not have any experience or relevant skill in the specific area. To avoid this misunderstanding brief role descriptions are required to help avoid confusion about a particular role.

The volunteer role description should include:

- Name of volunteer role
- Brief description of volunteer role
- Location
- Supervised by
- Days and times needed
- Minimum length of volunteer commitment required
- List of tasks or duties
- Qualifications, qualities and/or skills required
- Training provided

It is vital to review role descriptions after a while to find out how well the description fits the job. It also keeps the volunteer motivated, if it needs to be changed, involve and utilise the volunteer in updating the role description.



THE PROCESS OF RECRUITING

This is vital in finding the right volunteer that is needed by the club. This should not be a formal affair but it is very important in identifying the level of qualification of the volunteer and the skills they have. The recruitment process involves identifying the level of qualification of the volunteer and the skills they have. The recruitment process involves identifying the volunteer wanted and inviting them to the club for an informal meeting. The Volunteer Coordinator should also attend to get to know the volunteer also. It is important to make the volunteer feel comfortable in this situation and make sure they know it is not an interview.

There are many benefits of having an informal discussion with the volunteer:

- It helps to find out what experience/skills they have
- Why they want to be involved in your club?
- What experience they have working in that particular area?
- What dates and times they are available to volunteer?
- Any additional qualifications
- Have they completed a Garda Vetting Form through one of the Gaelic Games Associations and is it still in date?
- Have they completed a Code of Ethics Awareness course?
- If possible provide the volunteer with a club t-shirt as this will make them feel part of the club
- Show them the benefits and opportunities they will have whilst volunteering
- Make it appealing to them so they will be interested
- Obtain references, even if verbal, if possible for the volunteer



INDUCTION TO YOUR CLUB

First impressions are important – even in a club. For some volunteers, an induction could be their first introduction to the club. If your club has a number of people starting volunteer work at the same time, consider running a group induction (such as at the beginning of each season).

Inductions Help Volunteers:

- feel welcomed and valued
- understand the club
- understand their role and what is expected of them

Inductions Help Clubs:

- reduce risk
- demonstrate professionalism in their approach to volunteering
- provide a safe environment for volunteers
- support volunteers

When Inducting New Volunteers:

- provide a welcoming letter from the Volunteer Coordinator or club chairperson
- create a generic or adaptable Welcome Pack for each new volunteer (see Welcome Pack section)
- ensure that your existing volunteers and key people know that a new volunteer is starting prior to their arrival
- have the chairperson of the club make a personal phone call
- hold a welcome function (may be cost effective if several volunteers join around the same time)
- ensure they are aware of their rights and responsibilities
- ask someone from the club to introduce the volunteer to other key members (create a checklist to ensure everyone is covered)
- give guided tours of the clubrooms and facilities
- discuss how they will access facilities and equipment
- issue keys if appropriate
- provide them with relevant merchandise (e.g. this could be a specific club t-shirt or hoodie for example)



- provide a list of the names of players if required
- provide necessary information regarding any medical or other conditions of the players if required
- connect them with a buddy from the club
- stagger the induction so that they are not overloaded with too much information all at once

Forms of Induction

- **A hand-over period** where the outgoing volunteer supports and trains the incoming
- **A buddy system** - where new volunteers are assigned to someone already in the role to work alongside them and to learn 'on the job'
- **Mentoring** - to nominate mentors around the club to support new volunteer in an ongoing manner
- **Training Session** - to conduct a session where new volunteers are offered training / information about their role and the requirements
- **Drip Feed** - organise a regular catch up with new volunteers to extend induction over time
- **External Training** - support volunteers to undertake the necessary training required for their role e.g. funding or part funding a Coaching Course



Sample Volunteer Induction Checklist – use as a starting point

This checklist supports new Volunteer Induction / Orientation to be thorough and consistent regardless of who conducts it. NB that volunteers will have different learning needs so that Induction may need to be conducted across a number of initial visits.

Once a Volunteer Role has Been Established

The nominated volunteer should use this checklist as a guide and record of what the Induction has incorporated

Volunteer Name: _____

Induction Commenced: ___/___/___

Induction Complete: ___/___/___

Induction Conducted By: _____

Signed: _____

- 1. The new volunteer has been shown around the facility:
 - a. Introduced to committee members and other people around the club

- 2. The new volunteer is shown around the facility
 - a. The amenities
 - b. Where to secure valuables
 - c. Kitchens etc. (how to access water, tea and coffee)
 - d. Where equipment and supplies are kept
 - e. Shown how to access keys
 - f. Shown where the telephone is located if any
 - g. Shown where first aid equipment, ice etc. are located



3. The volunteer has had the role, purpose and values of the club explained and has been provided with
- a. relevant fixtures, newsletter, details of website
4. The volunteer also needs to be shown:
- a. Specific space, areas e.g. office if doing accounts etc.
 - b. About parking
5. The volunteer running the induction explains the following procedures and provides a Welcome Pack with information for further reference.
- a. Confidentiality, how volunteer privacy is maintained
 - b. Grievance procedures
 - c. Evacuation procedures
 - d. Given a run-down of club contacts and what various people do
6. The new volunteer has had the club expectations explained and what they should be able to expect from others in the club
- a. Gone through Codes of Conduct
 - b. Taken through the Welcome Pack
7. Another member or volunteer is assigned as a Mentor or Buddy to show the new volunteer the specific tasks outlined in the Role Description
8. The new Volunteer has filled in a Registration Form and provided emergency contact details
9. A date has been catch up and see how everything is going
10. The new volunteer is set to go!



SCREENING AND SELECTING VOLUNTEERS

Do you Need to Select at all?

Screening and selection is important for every club that involves volunteers as the majority of these volunteers will be in contact with juveniles in your club. It is important though that you are trying to involve the local community and encourage participation by those with a particular interest and are welcoming to anyone who wants to join in. There will be instances, however, where your club will need to make an informed decision about who it will and will not accept as a volunteer. Examples include:

- if volunteers will be working with vulnerable people, such as children
- if volunteers are going to be doing a lot of unsupervised work
- if volunteers will be handling money, or will be put in similar positions of trust

Some Basics

- There is no screening device in the world that comes with a guarantee
- Having checks in place, and advertising this, is in itself a good screening technique, but be careful about putting off potentially good volunteers
- Be clear and fair throughout the process; tell people what checks you are planning to carry out and get their consent beforehand
- Don't acquire any more information than you actually need to know about the volunteer
- Be consistent; check every volunteer in the same way, even if you already know him/her.
- Don't be any more strict when checking volunteers than you would be if you were checking paid staff
- Store all confidential information securely; restrict access to those who really need it
- Never rely on 'gut instinct' alone; a combination of screening tools (see below) is always preferable than relying on only one, and only use methods which are appropriate to the nature of the voluntary work.



Role Descriptions and Organisational Information

This is the first stage in any screening and selection procedure. By providing accurate information about your club and the tasks to be done, you enable potential volunteers to undertake a process of self-selection to see if they would be interested in, and suitable for, working with you.

Application Forms and CVs

These allow the club to gain administrative details (name, address etc.) as well as asking questions about people's experience and their reasons for wanting to volunteer. Application forms, unlike CVs, ensure that everyone is treated the same way and that the same information is gathered from all. Forms can be completed before, during or after an interview. Remember that written forms can be off-putting for people with literacy problems or for those with poor English.

Interviews (Chats)

Interviews, which can be individual or group sessions, should always be regarded as a two-way process, in which the club and the volunteer can find out about each other's suitability. Make interviews as informal as possible (consider calling them 'chats'); putting people at ease will ensure you get the best out of them.

Checking Skills and Qualifications

It might be appropriate, at times, to ask people to perform a task, in order to verify a certain skill. Examples include: coaching a team and so on. At times, you may also need to confirm that someone holds certain qualifications such as coaching certificates. You could ask applicants to bring proof of qualifications with them to an interview.



References

Some clubs may ask their volunteer for a reference for a specific role, a club could request two character references from non-relatives. References can be given over the telephone or in writing. A simple reference form or telephone reference checklist ensures consistency, is easy to complete, and also guarantees that difficult issues are not avoided deliberately.

Garda Vetting

Garda Vetting is a procedure that investigates individuals if their work involves substantial access to children and other vulnerable persons. The procedure provides information on any prosecutions or convictions a person may have had. There are strict procedures around how the process operates and the LGFA can advise on this.

Please remember that these checks are by no means fool proof (for example, a volunteer may have committed offences abroad or may have offended but not have been convicted). Also remember that evidence of a criminal conviction does not necessarily mean that someone cannot volunteer; it depends entirely on the nature of the voluntary work.

Health checks

In certain instances, you may need to ask potential volunteers for medical evidence or ask them to go for a health check. Examples might include:

- if they will be travelling with other members
- if they have suffered from a mental or physical illness; are they now ready to volunteer?



Trial period

Some clubs use the processes of induction, training and probation as forms of selection. For example, some clubs require people to undergo a training/coaching course before taking them on as volunteers. Others have an observation period where the volunteer is closely supervised and supported while they undertake their assignment.

How to Say No

Inevitably, screening means you sometimes have to say 'no' to potential volunteers. This can be very difficult. Always make sure you do it, however, and don't simply hope that people will go away. You can refuse people by letter, on the telephone or face-to-face. Whichever method you choose, stress that you are following official policy, explain why they have been unsuccessful, offer suggestions on building experience/skills and if appropriate, offer alternatives.

Please remember that just because a volunteer might not be suitable for the position they wanted does not mean they got not volunteer in another role in your club.



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 at 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.





Section 2

RETENTION



CREATING A DATABASE OF VOLUNTEERS

Most clubs have a large computer database with volunteer contact details, addresses, hours served, awards presented, and other vital information. The most direct means by which computers can streamline the management process is with the use of a volunteer database, made possible by one of the many different types of software. Clubs can create their own database if they have such programs as;

- Microsoft Access, Filemaker Pro, Excel, or Lotus Approach

Steps to ensure an effective database:

- **Ensure to use someone used to computers to set up your database.** This can be volunteers who use the database on a regular basis or have knowledge about databases.
- **Create a written process for working with the database.** Written documents about database instructions mean there is less chance for error and it will also assist a new volunteer coming into a role to use this in future.
- **There needs to be a Record keeping King or Queen.** While several people might be keeping the records up-to-date, one person needs to take the lead and report to the volunteer coordinator.
- **Train, train, train.** Volunteers using the record-keeping database are less likely to make mistakes if they are trained. Volunteers need to attend upgrade training as your system is improved.
- **Limit the access.** The only people who can access the database are those with training and have been given guideline son how to use the system or document. It is easy to do this by using the security parts of the program in the database e.g. security code. The King or Queen of the database should be in charge of access.
- **Clean up.** Many volunteers serve in more than one capacity and that makes it likely they may appear more than once in the database. There should be a regular system for eliminating duplicates in the records and checking the accuracy of the information, you have.
- **Stay on top of Input.** Keep the database viable by timely input of data. A good database is only useful if you make changes regularly.
- **Think disaster.** Organize a disaster plan. Back up records once per month in an off-site location, e.g. Cloud or external hard drive.



Create a Simple Excel Database

A sample excel database is available under 'Additional Resources'.

Access is a great database application, but let's face it – sometimes it's just a "bit" complicated! There are a lot of times when it would be nice to have some of the capabilities of a database without all the hassles. This is where Excel really comes in handy!

If you design your Excel workbook correctly, you can use Excel to look at your data in many of the same ways you would use a database application – you can sort data in many different ways, filter it so you see only data that matches specific criteria, and you can reorganize your data in any way you want it "on the fly" as your needs change.

At times, we need to keep track of information and a good place to this is in an Excel database file. An Excel database file makes it easy to enter, store, and find specific information for your volunteers.

To use an Excel workbook as a database, your data needs to be structured in the list format. An Excel list consists of columns and rows of data structured in a specific way:

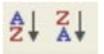
- Each column contains the same category of data in every row in the column (similar to a field in a database)
- Each row in the list contains all of the fields of data for one entity (a person, club, role, etc.) similar to a record in a database, but called sets of data in Excel's terminology
- The first row of the list must contain a unique name at the top of each column. This first row does **not** need to be the first row of the worksheet.
- The row containing the column headings must be formatted differently from the rest of the list (i.e. bold, larger font, italicized, etc.)
- There can be no blank rows in the list (there can be blank cells in a column, but the entire row cannot be empty)
- Data in a column must be in the same format for every row in the column (i.e. numbers can't be spelled out in one row and entered as digits in the rest of the rows in that column)
- Other data in the worksheet can be located outside the boundaries of the list

Here's an example of an Excel list:

Number	First Name	Surname
1	Mary	Malone
2	Emma	Murphy
3	Paula	Kane
4	Karen	Hanlon



- The cells in the first row of the list that contain the column headings are formatted differently (italicized), and each column has a unique name. Each row contains a set of data about one person, and there are no blank rows in the list.
- Data can be sorted alphabetically or numerically in Excel using the Quick Sort buttons on the Standard Toolbar. Sorts can be in Ascending (A-Z) or Descending (Z-A) order.
- Many people get frustrated with sorting in Excel because of the way they perform the sort – first they select an entire column by clicking on the column letter, then they click the Quick Sort buttons on the Toolbar. The only trouble with this method is that only the selected data gets sorted – the rest of the data in each row stays right where it started!
- To sort the right way in Excel, all you need to do is put the cell pointer in any cell in the column you wish to sort, then click one of the Sort buttons.
- If your data wasn't originally sorted alphabetically or numerically, once you've performed a sort on the data you won't be able to return the list to its original order; however, you CAN add an additional column to your list, and number each row sequentially so that you can resort that column numerically.



Numbering Cells

You can use Excel's Fill Series feature to quickly number the new column sequentially:

1. In the first cell to be numbered, type the number 1
2. In the next cell down, type the number 2
3. Select those two cells
4. Position the mouse pointer over the Fill Handle in the lower right corner of the selected cells
5. Click and drag the black, thin cross mouse pointer down to the end of the column
6. To return the list to its original sort order, select any cell in the numbered column and click the Sort Ascending button

4	<i>NUM</i>	<i>FIRST</i>
5	1	James
6	2	William
7		Geoff
8		Shing
9		Greg
10		Robert
11		Frank
12		Jace
13		Kirsten
14		Susan

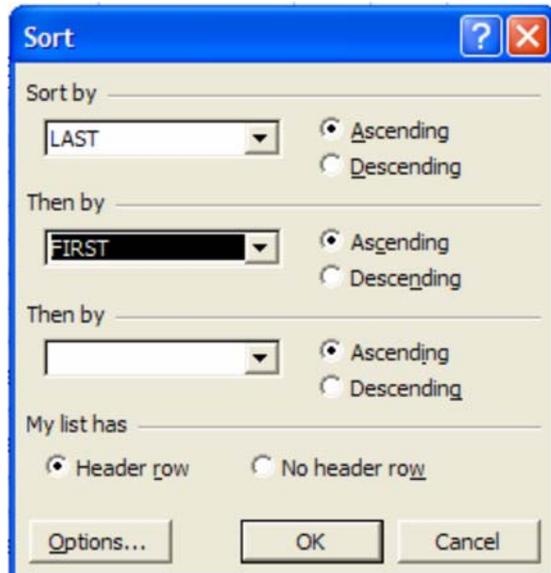
Sort by More than One Row

The Quick Sort buttons only allow you to perform sorts on one column at a time, but sometimes you need to perform more complex sorts. For example, if you have a list of names you may want to sort first by Last Name, then additionally by First Name in case there are duplicate last names. Use the Data, Sort command to perform this type of sort and others.

- Place the cell pointer in any cell in the list, choose Data from the Menu Bar, then click Sort...
- In the Sort dialog box, select the column you wish to use as the primary sort criteria from the Sort By drop-down list.



- Additionally, you can select a secondary sort criteria from the first Then by drop-down list and a third criteria from the second Then by drop-down list. This sorting method should make your sorting tasks **much** easier!



Filtering Your Database Using Autofilter

When your worksheet is structured as an Excel list, you can use the Data command to filter items that meet criteria you specify. When you've filtered a list, rows of data that don't match your criteria are temporarily hidden from view, but not deleted, making it easier to find exactly what you're looking for and do different kinds of data analysis.

There are two methods of filtering an Excel list – AutoFilter and Advanced Filter. AutoFilter is easier to use than the Advanced Filter method, but the AutoFilter method doesn't always have the power you need. Try AutoFiltering first – if that doesn't meet your filter needs, you can always remove the AutoFilter, and try building an Advanced filter.

To turn on AutoFilter, place the cell pointer in any cell within your list, click Data, highlight Filter, then click AutoFilter. Your list now displays small black triangles next to each column heading.

Numb	First Name	Surname	Address
1	Mary	Malone	
2	Emma	Murphy	
3	Paula	Kane	
4	Karen	Hanlon	

When you click a triangle in one column, a list of all of the different values in that column drops down. Click the desired value to filter the list to display only those values.



MANAGEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

MANAGING YOUR VOLUNTEERS BETTER.....

A QUICK GUIDE

Coordination

Appoint a volunteer co-ordinator to your club; someone who is responsible for recruiting managing and recognising your volunteers. This is someone who is a point of contact for volunteers.

Planning

Develop a volunteer management plan. This plan should address:

- Number of volunteers required and the roles they are required for
- Identification of skills already in the club (ie: conduct a skills audit of existing members and volunteers)
- Recruitment strategies
- Roles and responsibilities of volunteers
- Roles and responsibilities of the club
- Training that can be offered to volunteers
- Ongoing day-to-day support that can be provided
- Recognition strategies

Job Descriptions

Develop job descriptions outlining volunteers' duties. Job descriptions enable potential volunteers to understand what is expected of them before taking on the position

Orientation

Provide new volunteers with an orientation, including:

- a welcome to the club
- details of their position
- information on the day-to-day operations of the club
- support that will be provided to them
- introductions to key people in the club



Training

- Identify the training requirements of your volunteers
- Keep up to date with the training that is available for various positions in the club
- Include an allocation for volunteer training in the club's budget

Support

- Provide volunteers with a central point of contact ie: volunteer coordinator
- Ensure open channels of communication are available to volunteers. Provide them with the opportunity to ask questions, discuss problems, raise issues, put forward complaints
- Make sure that volunteers are not out of pocket; where possible cover their expenses
- Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the volunteers and the club are clearly defined and communicated
- Keep volunteers regularly informed about what is happening in the club
- Ensure that recognition of volunteers is ongoing.



TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

Training volunteers is crucial to a strong and effective volunteer program. Proper training, and continuing education, is one of the most important aspects of a volunteer coordinator's job. Proper training means fewer problems down the line, which again, is crucial for clubs that deal with groups. Training offers volunteers opportunities for personal growth and enrichment, and these experiences allow volunteers to build a base of knowledge and skills that will help them both in and outside of the club.

Types of Training

There are **three** types of training for volunteers:

1. Structured training program
2. On the job training,
3. On-going training, which includes re-certifications when necessary, as well as volunteer meetings and training days.

While there may be specific volunteer positions that only require one or two of these types of training, in general, the use of all three helps guarantee a productive working relationship with volunteers.

Tips and Tools for Training Volunteers:

1. The orientation is important in allowing the volunteer to feel as though he/she is part of the club and ensure he/she understands the club on a larger level. An orientation should cover the club's history, mission, activities, population served, other volunteer introductions, and volunteer basics. Include a tour of the agency and point out locations of office equipment and supplies if these are relevant to the position.
2. Volunteers have the right to be given training for the tasks required of the position. Even if the volunteer has been involved in other clubs and already has the skills necessary, she/he must still be offered clear directions and timelines for how the activities are to be completed. Volunteers must know what is expected of them, both in their results and delivery of the activities.
3. If training is required, it is helpful to create group training experiences over a full day or weekend for example a coaching course in the club. This allows the volunteers to learn together and support one another through the process. It also allows volunteers to get to know one another and make friends at the club.



4. Use as many different training techniques as possible such as: guest speakers, on-the-job demonstration, written material, etc. [Note that adults learn best when they have practical and experiential modes of learning. Ask for their input and allow them to practice and offer immediate feedback.]
5. The training should also explain the method of supervision — so that volunteers understand to whom they should turn with a question or for feedback — as well as how the supervisor will be evaluating the work. Supervision can be handled as check-in meetings, ongoing informal discussion, or written reports. It is important to set up "checkpoints" along the way.



IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is key in helping to get your volunteers involved with the club. It keeps them updated and in the 'loop' with what is happening at the club and helps them and the club progress towards those goals. Communicating with volunteers will also help the volunteer to take greater responsibility in the club. Communicating should also help in encouraging ideas and where practical, allows responsibility to implement them.

Tips for Communication

Volunteers play a key role in all clubs but they sometimes get short shrift when it comes to internal communication especially if they are not on committees etc. where they will receive information. However, when it comes to volunteer retention and level of engagement, how and how much you communicate plays a role. Here are five tips for better volunteer communication.

1. **A good beginning** – Volunteers often approach a club, or are approached, because something about their activities is appealing to them. Take the time to find out exactly what the appeal is and how much the potential volunteer knows about the club. This helps in terms of finding out where he/she can fit in. Use your introduction as a way to start orienting the volunteer. Discuss not only on your mandate but also the culture of the club and where volunteers fit.
2. **Volunteer manual** – A handbook specifically tailored to volunteers is a great way to ensure that volunteers have the information they need about your club, and their role in it, at their fingertips. Include task-related info as well as practical info such as changing facilities, bathroom and fire alarm locations. Whether online or in hard copy format, make sure that the content is well-organized and indexed. Although the volunteer may read the handbook cover to cover, it is more likely to be used as a reference so being able to quickly and easily find information is important.
3. **Regular check-in** – Just as you would for employees, have a regular check-in with volunteers. Find out how they are managing their role, whether they are having any difficulties, or if they would like to expand/deepen their involvement. Perhaps they have certain goals for themselves you can help them to achieve.
4. **Keep them in the loop** – Many times, clubs forget to communicate key structural changes, challenges or developments to their volunteer contingent. Often, the club management's focus is on keeping only committees informed and volunteers are an afterthought. But to maintain the level of engagement and to make sure that everyone involved remains informed of critical developments, make sure you consider volunteer communication. In some cases, it's appropriate to invite volunteers to meetings or to include them in routine memos or e-mail correspondence.
5. **Customized communication** – Depending on the number of volunteers and what type of unique roles they fill, it might make sense to develop tailored communication for volunteers such as an electronic newsletter, intranet space or even a social media platform such a Facebook page. You can use this tool not just for sharing information but also for developing a volunteer community with special recognition and unique stories that demonstrate the value of volunteer contributions.



Do these five tips seem basic? Common sense? They are, but it's amazing how often volunteers get overlooked when it comes to internal communication. Having an organised program for volunteer communication will help to ensure that volunteers act and respond in ways that are appropriate to your club. It will also enhance their level of engagement and commitment.

Many times, volunteers drift away because they don't feel they are really part of a team or sufficiently appreciated. When you formalize communication including volunteers it delivers the message that they are important and indeed part of the club.

Now it's your turn. How will you communicate with volunteers?



ABC OF RETENTION

Well done!!! You have successfully encouraged people to volunteer for your club – that is the easy part. Now you have to retain them!

Remember:

- Why do people volunteer?
- What benefits can you offer to potential volunteers?

Volunteers want to feel:

- Welcome
- Part of the team
- Needed
- Useful

Here is the A-B-C of your Retention Strategy:

A INDUCTION

B SUPPORT

C RECOGNITION

A - Induction

A successful induction is crucial to volunteer retention. The process will include:

First Contact Point

- Meet new volunteers and make them feel welcome, special and appreciated from the start
- Arrange to spend time exploring their interests, reasons for volunteering, and expectations from the organisation
- Make time to brief volunteers on your club's goals, people involved and facilities
- Outline their specific role and responsibilities
- Encourage questions



- Identify any training needs
- Provide a 'buddy system' for support

New volunteers may need help to gain experience in various roles. Volunteers may also need support in developing and retaining confidence.

Current volunteers will need reviews and training updates.

B - Support

Maintain regular contact with new volunteers.

- Show appreciation of a job well done
- Continually offer help and support
- Give any training needed, or suggestions for gaining skills/experience
- Listen regularly
- Strengthen links between the volunteer team members

C - Recognition

Volunteers are truly special people. Continually acknowledging their involvement and contribution in unique ways is very important.

Devise your own volunteer recognition programme and publicise this to all members. You could:

- Write letters of thanks
- Provide certificate of appreciation
- Give club merchandise e.g. t-shirt
- Acknowledge your volunteers in club newsletters
- Present volunteer awards at the AGM
- Give complimentary tickets to special events and functions
- Send special occasion cards e.g. get well, birthday
- Arrange discounts at local sports shops etc. for volunteers
- Reimburse for 'out of pocket' expenses
- Hold social events for your volunteers
- Acknowledge volunteer efforts during committee meetings
- Provide opportunities to meet some county players etc. if coming to your club
- Display photographs in your clubhouse/ schools notice boards
- Hold 'Volunteer of the Month' award



Summary

- Ensure your volunteers have positive, enjoyable experiences
- Know and recognise each volunteer and use their names
- Continually acknowledge appreciation of their contribution
- Give rewards where possible



MENTORING TRAINING

Mentors can give new or existing volunteers the extra encouragement and support they need to be the best they can and increase retention rates.

What is a Mentor?

A mentor is a caring and committed volunteer willing to support and help improve other volunteers in your club. By spending a few hours a week sharing activities, listening, encouraging, challenging, and building skills and self-reliance, volunteer mentors can help volunteers from the beginning through to achieving success no matter how that is measured.

Why Mentor?

Consider becoming a mentor if you enjoy spending time with other volunteers and are concerned about their success. Clubs benefit from a spectrum of community support that includes adult role models from all walks of life. People often become mentors to:

1. Make a difference to another volunteer;
2. Gain a sense of fulfillment from helping other people;
3. Help volunteers increase their success;
4. Ensure volunteers are aware of their role in the club.

How Can I be Most Effective as a Mentor?

- **Be an advocate and a role model.**
Your role is not to replace club committees or serve as an authority figure but to offer direction and support.
- **Be consistent and maintain regular contact.**
Volunteering for the first time can be difficult for people in the club and they will really appreciate the contact from a mentor. One of the best ways to build trust is to be a patient and regular presence with the volunteer but also allow them to think for themselves also.
- **Set realistic goals and expectations.**
Work to build a trusting relationship first. Changes such as improved coaching performance take time. Achieving short-term goals (e.g., taking the warm up) can build confidence and motivation to tackle long term goals.
- **Give your mentee voice and choice in deciding on activities.**
Provide a range of activity choices for the volunteer role. People feel more invested in the relationship if they can exercise some control.
- **Be positive.**
Offer frequent encouragement and expressions of direct confidence. Notice and remark on positive behaviours.



- **Let your mentee have control over what the two of you talk about — and how you talk about it.**
Be sensitive to the volunteer’s cues. Don’t push for confidences or fire too many questions at your mentee.
- **Listen.**
“Just listening” is a critical form of emotional support.
- **Respect the trust your mentee places in you.**
Respond in ways that show you see your mentee’s side of things. Give advice sparingly. Maintain confidentiality.
- **Remember that you are responsible for building the relationship.**
Take responsibility for making and maintaining contact. Understand that the volunteer may not give mentors feedback and reassurance, but this does not mean they are not benefiting from the relationship.
- **Have a laugh together.**
It is important that the mentee feels comfortable in your presence and therefore although they are receiving advice they also need feel comfortable to relax and enjoy the experience also.

Elements of Quality Mentoring Programmes

Elements of effective mentoring program operations include the following:

- Recruit mentors and mentees (other volunteers):
 - Define eligibility for mentors and mentees;
 - Conduct awareness and information sessions for potential mentors.
- Screen potential mentors and mentees:
 - Ensure selected mentor has the experience to share with the new volunteer;
 - Conduct garda vetting on volunteer and ensure completion of new mentor forms etc.;
- Hold orientations.
 - Orient and train mentors, and mentees;
 - Provide an overview and guidelines for the mentoring process;
 - Clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations, and
 - Discuss how to handle a variety of situations.
- Match mentors and mentees:
 - Use established criteria;
 - Arrange an introduction between mentors and mentees, and
 - Ensure mentors and mentees understand and agree to the mentoring process and are ensured that this is to assist with their roles not to check up on the new volunteer.



- Provide ongoing support, supervision and monitoring of mentoring relationships:
 - Offer continuing training opportunities for participants;
 - Communicate regularly with participants and offer support;
 - Help mentors and mentees define next steps for achieving mentee goals;
 - Bring mentors together to share ideas and support;
 - Establish a process to manage grievances, resolve issues and offer positive feedback;
 - Assist mentors and mentees whose relationship is not working out, and
 - Assure that appropriate documentation is done on a regular basis eg. Simple feedback sheet.

How to Develop a Mentoring Plan

Mentoring is used in schools, clubs, and staff development programs. There is no single mentoring plan that fits everyone. Some are formal, official programs within an organization, while others are more casual and informal relationships. It is important if you decide to have a mentoring process in your club that you have a proper plan for putting this in place.

1. **Identify the purpose of your mentoring relationship.** You may want to teach specific information or develop a particular skill. Having a clear purpose in mind will help you develop a specific mentoring plan that meets your needs and expectations.

- Personal development mentoring focuses on growing in social or leadership skills, or in developing one's character.
- Club mentoring also often partners new volunteers with current ones in order to help them learn specific tasks or jobs. There may also be training opportunities designed to help the volunteer progress.

2. **Determine the format of mentoring you would like to put in place.** Each person prefers a certain environment in which they can connect with their mentor. Decide what works best for you.

- Traditional mentoring consists of a one-on-one, face-to-face relationship.
- Group mentoring includes one mentor but several mentees.
- Team mentoring involves several mentors with several mentees.



- Peer mentoring consists of a more mutual relationship, where each person mentors the other.

3. **Identify potential mentors.** Mentors should be knowledgeable in the area you want to learn about. You should also have a good connection with them. For example if the new volunteer is a coach then it is important that their mentor is an experienced and knowledgeable coach.

- If you are pairing others together in mentoring relationships, it is important that you consider your matches carefully. Take interests, personalities, and skills into consideration.

4. **Brainstorm potential activities or discussions.** There are particular purposes for a mentoring relationship and it is important that the mentor and mentee decide on these prior to the process. Explore different things they may learn throughout it.

- Make a list of specific things the new volunteer wants to learn. For example, if the purpose for mentoring is to learn more about being a secretary, identify the secretary or assistant in your club so the new volunteer can learn these specific skills and write these down. At the beginning of the mentoring process.

5. **Create a structure for your mentoring relationship.** This helps both mentors and mentees have appropriate expectations and enables them to decide if the commitment is one they can realistically manage.

- Determine when and how often they will meet. Figure out which days and times work best for you. Then, based on your goals for this mentoring relationship, decide how often the mentee will need to meet with their mentor.



- Decide where they will meet. Some mentors prefer to have their mentee tag along with them during normal club activities. Others may want to meet for specific occasions or events.
- Lay down relationship guidelines. Together, decide when it is appropriate to call each other, what information will be kept confidential, if it is okay to visit one another at home, and so forth.
- Set a tentative time frame for your mentoring relationship. Mentoring often takes place for 6 months to 1 year. At the end of that time, revisit your purpose for meeting and decide if you want to renew your commitment for another set period of time.

6. Commit to **mentoring relationship**. Trust and reliability are two factors that are essential in strengthening the mentoring relationship. Each person needs to agree to show up regularly and on time. They also need to fulfill any personal obligations they agreed to throughout the mentoring. For example, if they are to prepare an event together, each person needs to finish their section.



TOP TIPS FOR RETAINING VOLUNTEERS

Why Retain Volunteers?

It is important that your Volunteer Coordinator and all your members understand the importance of retaining volunteers. Points to consider include:

- Recruiting new volunteers is costly and time consuming
- The experience of your current volunteers is invaluable
- The club may have invested time, skills and training in the development of volunteers
- Retaining ensures that the continuity of the club ethos is maintained
- The loyalty of the volunteers is vital to the club, especially during difficult or busy periods

There are many reasons why people start, or continue to volunteer. They often want to be welcomed as part of a team, meet new people and have the opportunity to learn new skills. Many people volunteer for the chance to feel useful and valued. As well as giving something back to the community, they usually feel that they are getting something out of the experience. Here are some examples of things you can do that will make volunteering a better experience and, therefore, help retain your volunteers:

What to do	More Detail
Have a Welcome Pack and Induction	This should include information on: Club structure and policies (e.g. child protection) Contact Details Role Description A welcome and introduction(s) Buddy/ Mentoring arrangements Advise on equipment/clothing etc.
Communicate with your volunteers	Clear, regular communication is vital Hold regular volunteer briefing meetings Use text or email for quick communication Have a volunteer page or section on your website Hold one to one meetings where appropriate



Make sure they are enjoying the challenge	Variety and challenge is important Give recognition and reward (say Thank You) Make the volunteer feel wanted and valued Keep people motivated Use team work where appropriate
Give your volunteers skills and training	Identify with the volunteer, what, if any, training is needed Sell training as a positive reward Understand that training will give confidence Internal – training given by club member including practical support External – provide skills and training courses

Finally, it is important to retain your volunteers for the right reasons. Sometimes it is the right time for someone to move on or take more of a back seat. Your club should plan for this as part of your retention policy.





Section 4

RECOGNITION

& REVIEW



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PLAN

It is essential that you show appreciation to all the volunteers in involved in your club and show support for their effort. The unpaid work of all the people involved in the club allows the base of your club to be wide, deep and strong and continue to grow annually. In order to maintain or increase the volunteer base it is important that all volunteers at all levels of the game are appreciated, thanked and supported in appropriate ways by your club.

The Plan

While the volunteers and their roles are many and varied, there are 3 common areas that can be focused on to appreciate and support the volunteers. These are:

1. Recognise
2. Resource
3. Respect

Many clubs are already showing appreciation to their volunteers but you should review what you are doing against the following and if appropriate implement into your clubs.

1. Recognise

- **Make a club policy that all teams have a way to thank team officials.**
All clubs should have policy and procedures in place to ensure all teams thank their team officials.
- **“Volunteer of the Year” Award as part of the club prize giving.**
A “Volunteer of the Year” award should be included as part of the club’s prize giving. This award can go to any administrator, team official or volunteer in any capacity.
- **Thank you letter from Club Chairperson to all volunteers and team officials in the club**
Letter from Club Chairperson to all volunteers thanking them for their contribution.
- **All volunteers invited to a club thank you night. Possibly include as a sponsor’s thank you night.**
Clubs should hold a “function” of some sort to thank their volunteer base. This thank you could be incorporated into a sponsors thank you function.



2. Resource

- **Team officials included in any clothing sponsorship.**
Where possible clubs should endeavour to obtain clothing sponsorship that also covers team officials and the volunteer base of the club.
- **Organisations have a stated policy as to reimbursement of personal expenses incurred by volunteers on behalf of the organisation.**
Team officials and volunteers should not be 'out of pocket' for items of spending incurred on club business. A policy, and procedures for expense reimbursement should be formulated. It is essential that this is done at the start of the year and that all volunteers made fully aware of spending allowed etc. Clubs may set up text accounts for example to ease these expenses.
- **Training and up-skilling promoted.**
Clubs should actively promote and provide opportunities for up-skilling and training for volunteers. A club can include training for local teachers in this also to encourage further development in schools.
- **Training equipment readily provided.**
Clubs should have readily accessible, and in good working condition, all the necessary equipment for training. As above it is important for the club to outline at the start of the year how volunteers get access to this equipment.

3. Respect

- **Ease the administration load for team officials.**
Clubs should ensure that policies and procedures are in place that makes the administrative load on volunteers as easy as possible.
- **Workload is divided into small lots. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and documented.**
Clubs should have clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all volunteers. These should be documented for the volunteers to know what is expected from them. Small volumes of work for many is better than large volumes for a few.
- **“Volunteer Succession” plan in place.**
The club should develop a volunteer succession plan so that no volunteers feel that they are forced to keep the role for life. Such planning helps ensure new blood flows in.
- **Formal support plan is in place.**
Volunteers need to know who to turn to for help and support. This should be formalised in your club.



RECOGNISING AND REWARDING

YOUR VOLUNTEERS

Job satisfaction is one of the most important aspects to remember when you are encouraging volunteers to remain with your club. This is easy to achieve but also easily forgotten:

- Find out what your volunteers want and what motivates them
- Use clear role descriptions to ensure clarity on the nature of the role they have accepted
- ‘Buddy’ them up with existing volunteers in their club to provide training and support
- Volunteers should be encouraged to give ideas and implement them
- Provide feedback to volunteers and reward them. This may be a simple thank you
- Targets should be set for all volunteers so they are fully aware of the part they are playing in the development of your club

Enable Volunteers to Enjoy Their Work with You by:

- Helping volunteers to experience personal achievement in the role they are doing
- Helping them feel they are making a worthwhile contribution to the objectives of the club
- Make the role challenging so it demands the best from them, this will also help match the volunteers capabilities with the appropriate responsibilities
- Show adequate recognition and praise for the work of the volunteer
- Make sure the volunteer is capable and that they have control of the role they are in
- Make the volunteer feel that they are developing and improving their skills and abilities

Recognition

Some ideas that will be useful in thanking and recognising your volunteers are:

1. Evaluate volunteer involvement on an ongoing basis
2. Create a climate in which volunteers can feel motivated
3. Say thank you often, and mean it!
4. Match the volunteer’s interests with the role you give them



5. Send birthday/ special occasion messages
6. Provide a clear role description for every volunteer
7. Make sure new volunteers are welcomed warmly
8. Highlight the impact that the volunteer contribution is having on your club
9. Show an interest in volunteer's personal interest and their outside life
10. Tell volunteers they have done a good job
11. Always have work for your volunteers to do and never waste their time
12. Give volunteers a real voice in your club
13. Ensure your volunteers are fully aware of who they have for support in your club
14. Provide meaningful and enjoyable work
15. Send 'Thank You' notes and letters where appropriate
16. Smile when you meet your volunteers!
17. Say something positive about the qualities of each volunteer
18. Involve volunteers in decision making processes
19. Give a certificate to commemorate anniversaries of involvement
20. Develop a volunteer policy
21. Allow volunteers to debrief and give you feedback on the roles they are in
22. Let volunteers put their name to something they have helped to produce or make happen
23. Have a volunteer comments box and consider any suggestions carefully
24. Supervise and support volunteers' work
25. Remember your volunteers' names. This may seem a bit obvious but forgetting a volunteers name can make them feel very much unappreciated.



IMPORTANCE OF THANKING YOUR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteering is conditional. At some level, people want to feel appreciated for their efforts.

Acknowledgement and recognition should encompass two types of rewards:

1. Implicit rewards where recognition is inferred and inherent in the action. This is where the internal rewards of volunteering are more important than external rewards.
2. Explicit rewards where recognition is tangible and stated. People are not generally looking for a high level of explicit rewards in sport volunteering.

Implicit Rewards

These include:

- Volunteer advocacy
- Creating a dialogue with volunteers and giving them advice
- Policies and practices to enable volunteer tasks to be accomplished
- The 'buzz' of achievements made tangible; and
- Actions and structures that increase the volunteer experience

Explicit Rewards

These include:

- A verbal thank you
- Prizes
- Access to club merchandise
- Recognition from peers
- Social functions for volunteers at the beginning and end of season
- Acknowledgement of people's efforts in the committee minutes
- Sincere thank you from players
- Cards/Texts/Emails for special occasions e.g. birthdays

Implications

- Rewards can be built into the volunteer roles as well as through explicit means
- Clubs should take time to ask volunteers how they might like to be recognised and rewarded/thanked
- Clear criteria should be established for thanking volunteers



DEALING WITH DIFFICULT VOLUNTEERS

Dealing with volunteers who are under-performing or exhibit inappropriate behaviour can be an awkward issue for many clubs. This is especially because of the nature of voluntary work and the need to retain as many volunteers as possible.

There is sure to be some conflict when you work with a group of different personalities. This is as true with volunteers as it is with staff. If only 2 percent of the volunteers you work with are troublemakers, that small percentage is going to take up the most of your time.

Unfortunately, that's not the situation we live in and we have to find ways to handle troublesome volunteers. The following is suggested advice to help deal with volunteers who cause problems for you and their colleagues:

Know-It-Alls

- The name says it. They alienate others. They also limit creativity.

How to deal with this type of personality:

- Don't ignore this type. If they don't get pushback quickly they will assume their advice is always wanted and always right.

Saboteurs

- Rare, but they do exist.

How to deal with this type of personality:

- One of the worst things they do is hold back important information. They can cause genuine, consistent failure.
- Prevention is the best treatment.

Gossips

- They particularly enjoy when a club is in upheaval. Their damage usually is to morale.

How to deal with this type of personality:

- Stop them in their tracks by ensuring information flows freely.



Rule Breakers

- They ignore both club policies and position duties. Consequences: Lawsuit, anyone?

How to deal with this type of personality:

- Don't let them get away with it, but deal more discreetly and gently than with Know-It-Alls.

Negative Ones

- Nothing is ever right, including changes for the better. They can sap a club's energy.

How to deal with this type of personality:

- Listen to them, but don't get caught up in their negativity.

Social Climbers

- They care more about their status than your cause.

How to deal with this type of personality:

- Managing them takes patience. Be clear about expectations.

Harassers

- They are aggressive and intimidate others with demands and threats. They can derail programs.

How to deal with this type of personality:

- They often start mildly, so don't tolerate anything from them.

Prejudiced Ones

- Very often the first instance will come out of the blue.

How to deal with this type of personality:

- It will lead to a hostile environment. Don't tolerate it.

Extracted from "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Recruiting & Managing Volunteers," John L. Lipp



DISCIPLINE

There may be occasions where your club will need to discipline a volunteer. Discipline refers to actions taken to enforce your club's standards and regulations. The most common types of discipline problems include role behaviours and dishonesty. Where disciplinary procedure is required the following guidelines could be adopted:

- Discipline should take place as soon as possible following the incident
- Advance warning should be given to the volunteer before initiating the disciplinary action
- Consistency is important is using disciplinary action
- Discipline should be connected with the behaviour and not the person
- Discuss the issue in a calm, objective and serious manner
- State the problem specifically
- Keep the discussion impersonal
- Allow the volunteer to explain his or her position
- Maintain control of the discussion
- Obtain agreement on how mistakes can be prevented in the future
- Select disciplinary action progressively and consider mitigating circumstance

Robbins, SR, Bergman, R, Stagg, I and Coulter, M (2000)

5 General Tips

- Sometimes conflict between volunteers, when managed carefully and respectfully, can lead to growth for a club.
- Ignoring volunteers who act inappropriately only makes the situation worse.
- Deal directly with problem volunteers and focus on the behavior, not the person.
- Support volunteers and help them make their own decisions about whether or not their position is a good fit.
- Firing a volunteer should be a last-choice option. Document the behavior as well as any attempts you made to correct it.



SUCCESSION PLANNING

Now more than ever there is a need for clubs to consider their futures. Where will they be in 5 or 10 years time and where will their volunteers be? Clubs must ask themselves: what if key volunteers leave? Will all their knowledge and experience go with them. Who will carry the club into the future. Who will take on the key roles to ensure that the club survives and continues to grow? How will this process of change and handover happen?

Succession planning is about looking at where your club has come from, where it is now, where it needs to go and what your club can do to get it there. Ultimately succession planning should help you achieve the club's objectives over the next 5, 10 or 15 years by ensuring that your club has the right volunteers with the right skills in the right positions at the right time.

It is about putting a system in place to ensure that when someone leaves (such as the chairperson, secretary, coach or manager) the club is not left with a massive black hole of knowledge and expertise and that there is someone in the wings ready to step into that role. Most volunteer turnover occurs at the end of the season or at a time around your Annual General Meeting (AGM). A succession plan is necessary to provide opportunities for potential leaders within clubs to be identified and developed in readiness to move up into leadership positions. Clubs that plan for smooth transitions of leadership positions are less likely to experience disruptions to their operations and can better position themselves to replace volunteers who vacate their current positions.

Succession planning is vital to the continuity of your club. It ensures your club can continue to be successful and provide members with what they need. While some turnover of jobs is normal, high turnover rates can be a problem.

If the workload falls to only one or two people, the quality and fortunes of the club can quickly decline when those people leave. A succession plan will ensure that if someone steps down, someone can step into their shoes and pick up where they left off. Clubs that plan for smooth transitions of leadership positions are less likely to experience disruptions to their business.

Keys to a good succession plan

Many of the components of a good succession plan will also help other areas of the club. These will usually cover how things are done in the club, such as:

- having job descriptions so that current volunteers know what they should be doing, and what might be expected of new volunteers



- having a business or strategic plan so that anyone who is new to a committee can find out exactly what the future priorities are
- having a policies and procedures manual so that volunteers know how everything should be done.

The second part of good succession planning is human resources. Many of the above issues relate to people, whether it is fearing change, staying around for too long, or being the 'gatekeeper' (see description below). Trying to avoid any of these situations is as important as trying to groom successors for certain positions. This ensures that when the time for a changeover comes, it can be managed with a minimum of disruption and fuss. The ideal succession plan will allow existing volunteers to walk away without being missed.

Barriers to Succession Planning

There are some barriers to succession planning that your club might face. There may be some committee members or volunteers who are behaving in a certain way, or the committee may have processes that will not make succession planning easy.

Some common hurdles that might prevent effective succession planning are:

- **The gatekeeper** — a person on the committee who has probably been around for a while who holds all the knowledge and runs a system only they understand.
- **The irreplaceable person** — a member who believes they are irreplaceable and the committee will not function without them. This person usually has been on the committee for years.
- **Poor record keeping** — if important information, such as financial data or minutes of meetings, is not documented and made accessible, it is only retained in the memories of those involved in the process. Once these people leave, so does the information.
- **Seniors take all** — clubs that believe that those around the longest deserve the best positions will always have trouble with succession planning. Positions should be awarded to those best able to do the job, including newer or junior members if they have the required skills.
- **The longtime committee member** — a member who has reached their 'use by date'.
- **Fear of change** — if the committee is fearful of change, there will be a reluctance to have a succession plan in place.



Succession Planning Process – 5 Key Steps

1. Examine your club's position (current needs, critical roles and expected vacancies)

To commence succession planning it is vital for you to understand exactly why your club needs a plan for the future and what you hope to get out of it. This involves clarifying your club's current position to identify its needs for the future. There are three stages to this first step:

a) Identify your club's current and future needs

Consider your club in its current form. Think about the following three areas: club management, club activity and club people. Thinking about this helps you to understand your club's current position and why you are beginning to make a plan for succession.

b) Identify critical roles within your club

Once you have identified your club's current position and needs it is essential to identify the key roles within the club that will serve to address these needs now and into the future. That is, what do you see as the vital roles to your club's success in the future?

c) What vacancies are expected in these positions?

Once you have established the critical positions within the club you need to assess (to the best of your ability) the risk of turnover in these positions in the near future. Who is retiring? Who is moving away? Who has been in a role too long and is sick of it? Make a list and rank the expected departure/vacancy of key positions as either 'immediate', 'short term' (in next 12 months to 2 years) or 'long term' (in two years' time or beyond). The more you know about the timing of handover the more prepared you can be to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible.

2. Identify skills required to fill critical roles in your club

The second step in succession planning is to break down the roles, responsibilities and required knowledge for the critical roles you identified in Step 1. It is recommended to begin with the roles you marked as 'immediate' expected vacancy, then move on to 'short term' and finally 'long term'.

You need to devise a role description, in cooperation with the current volunteer in those roles, for each critical role. Record what skills and experience are required for key positions which will help the club in the future. If a role description exists, it provides a level of continuity in that role as the new volunteer continues in the position knowing exactly what is required of them and what the position is all about. Secondly a position description outlines exactly what you are looking for when you



start to recruit volunteers to fill the position. It is important to revisit these descriptions regularly and make appropriate updates.

3. Assess the skills gap in your club and identify potential successors

You should now have a good idea what positions you see as vital for the future success of your club and what skills and expertise are required to fill these positions. Now it is essential to identify whether your current volunteers possess the skills and expertise or whether skill gaps exist; in which case you will need to train and develop certain club volunteers to allow them to step into the role or alternatively recruit new volunteers with the appropriate expertise. Whether new or existing volunteers you club must begin to identify individuals who could step into the roles when current volunteers leave.

a) Assess existing volunteers' skills

The first step is figuring out what skills, experience or relevant qualities existing volunteers might have. Think about your current volunteers. Even though you may not have considered someone a good fit for the Treasurer role because they have always been involved on the coaching side of things, perhaps they run a small business and would have great skills to manage the club's financial needs. You need to identify the expertise and valuable qualities of your existing volunteers in case this fits well with one of your critical roles outlined in step 1.

b) Identify Potential Successors

Refer to the role descriptions you created in Step 2. Try to match the skills, characteristics and expertise of volunteers or members of your club with those outlined in these descriptions of your club's critical roles.

Once you have identified which volunteers match up with which positions it is also necessary to think about the following:

- Who has done good work in the past?
- Who has the qualities that fit well within our club?
- Who is a fast learner and easily adaptable to change?
- Who do you see as the leaders of the future in your club?
- How can we create a diverse volunteer base?
- Which volunteers have received positive feedback in the past?

These questions will help you distinguish between two potential successors with the same skill level or perhaps justify the placement of a volunteer who may not currently have the skills but demonstrates the potential to learn the skills quickly.



Now you should have an idea of whether you can fill the critical roles with existing club members or if need to recruit new volunteers to fill gaps.

c) External Recruitment of Potential Successors

Good recruitment practice is a vital aspect of effective succession planning. Firstly the club needs to actually find potential volunteers. Consider the following:

- Where could we find people in our community who possess the relevant skills?
- Where do the best volunteers come from? How can we reach them?
- Are there people who have said 'no' to volunteering in the past because they were too busy but may be available now?
- What kind of volunteers will we need in the next 5-10 years?
- Are there promising young people whom we could engage?
- Are we searching broadly enough or are we being too exclusive?
- Can we be more inclusive?
- Should we be implementing fixed terms for key positions and a limit to successive terms to avoid burnout and safeguard the club against poor volunteers being in positions for long periods?

Secondly once you have identified avenues of recruitment, or individuals you would like to engage, it is a good idea to set out a screening process to make sure the people you are recruiting are right for your club. Some clubs will put a recruitment committee in place to recruit, screen and induct volunteers so it is not one person completely responsible and this can also avoid the issue of personal friendships and relationships influencing decisions. It is then essential to induct new volunteers to make sure they understand exactly how their role fits within the 'big picture' of the club.

4. Develop and prepare potential successors

Sometimes your club may find the perfect volunteers with exactly the right skills to fill your critical positions, chances are though that most people will not possess all the skills or all the knowledge required of them. As a result it is crucial to continually invest in the development of your volunteers and take time to prepare them for roles in the future. By doing this, your club will be creating a greater depth of capability in your volunteer base, making it much easier to find suitable successors in the future. Sometimes providing training and development can be expensive and each club will need to decide what limitations they have. However before you decide you cannot afford it or you do not have the time, think about the outcome of having highly qualified volunteers for your club. You must try everything to get the best out of your people and to educate them so they can contribute to club success in the long term.



Training and development can be particularly important for potential successors to ensure they have the required expertise for when these positions become vacant. Mentoring can be very beneficial for this particular group.

5. Evaluate your succession plan

The final step in developing a succession plan is to evaluate and review how it has worked and what (if any) adjustments need to be made. Evaluation of your club's succession plan needs to be ongoing. It is about constantly monitoring movements within your club and making sure that you are prepared for what has to come. A succession plan is not something that you complete and then don't look at for a few years. It should be reviewed and evaluated on an ongoing basis to make sure it is keeping up with the changes within your club.

There are two aspects of evaluation; reviewing how the plan itself is working and reviewing movements or changes within your club that could influence the plan.

First and foremost it is vital that you know whether the plan itself is actually having a positive impact on your club. In order to gauge this your succession planning needs to be measurable and have clear indicators that measure the effectiveness and success of your plan. Someone needs to be accountable for the performance of the plan (e.g. chairperson or executive) and this will ensure a better level of commitment from them and encourage them to invest time and energy into making the plan effective.

Your club should choose measurable indicators that reflect your main priorities for the plan. Some may be measured purely with numbers but other indicators might require you to use surveys, informal chats or conduct interviews with volunteers. Some indicators could be:

- Volunteer turnover (how frequently your volunteers come and go)
- The number of existing volunteers who have stepped into new roles when they have become vacant and the number you had to recruit
- The time it has taken to fill vacant positions
- Feedback (from members, volunteers, committees, new recruits)
- Retention rates of volunteers (how long are they staying in your club?)
- Volunteer satisfaction (are they bored or overworked?)
- Reasons given for volunteer departure
- The nature of role transitions (smooth takeovers?)

There are other indicators that you can use to measure the success of your plan but it is essential that you decide at the start what these indicators will be to ensure you can record as much information as possible as you go along. Again this should not be too difficult and it should not add a whole new workload to already busy volunteers.



Secondly evaluation is about keeping your finger on the pulse. This is by constantly reviewing how things are going and taking notice of movements within your club, you can better predict what is likely to happen in the near future and prepare for it. The evaluation process is a crucial step to ensuring future growth of your club.





APPENDICES

PRE-

RECRUITMENT



Pre-Workshop Questionnaire

This questionnaire will help you to gather the information necessary to review your current volunteer practices. Taking the time to complete this review will assist you to paint a clear picture of what your club is doing well and what areas you may like to spend some time on. Gathering this information will make you better placed to attend the workshop and ensure that you get as much out of the workshop as possible.

2. Why does your club need volunteers?

3. Do you have policies or guidelines around engaging and involving volunteers?

4. On the table below please enter:

- a. Who is currently helping you and what they do?
- b. How many additional volunteers do you require and what do you need them to do?

Volunteer Role	Volunteers Confirmed	Volunteers Needed	What they do and what skills are required?

5. Do you know why your volunteers choose to volunteer? If so explain.



6. Where do your volunteers come from? i.e. who are they? (Parents, volunteers, etc.)

7. How does your club currently go about finding volunteers?

8. Does your club have a process in place to introduce new volunteers to the club?

9. Do you offer any training opportunities to your volunteers? If so, what are they? And how often?

10. How do you communicate with your volunteers?

11. How do you thank and reward volunteers?

12. Who is responsible for looking after volunteers?

13. Do you have job descriptions for your volunteers? If so, are your volunteers aware of them?





*If you are new to the area or just want to get more involved in the community,
volunteering can be a great way to learn and get involved in the place you live in.*

No matter when you arrived, volunteering can you help you make connections as you settle into your home.

Our Club Needs You!



Your Club Crest

Ways to Volunteer:

- On committees
- As a mentor
- Fund raising
- Mentoring other club members
- Website development
- General club activities

Benefits of Volunteering:

- Gain experience
- Develop community knowledge & social connections
- Develop new skills or improve existing
- Gain written references for CV
- Make contacts for future opportunities

Who can Volunteer?

Opportunities are available for everyone – whether you have limited English or are working full time, seeking employment or studying. You can volunteer with our club regardless of age or ability – we have something for everyone!

**Volunteering:
Helping you connect
with your
Community**

Further Information:

Contact: (NAME)

Phone:

Email:

Website:

When can I Volunteer?

There are opportunities to volunteer at any time – during the day, at night or on weekends. You can also volunteer for any period of time, from one hour to a few weeks, a few months or even a few years! Speak to us in the club to find the best volunteer role for you.





APPENDICES

RECRUITMENT



WELCOME PACK

The volunteer coordinator (or someone else appropriate) should welcome new volunteers to the club and provide an orientation so that they feel like they belong as quickly as possible. Each volunteer should also receive a welcome pack when they begin as a volunteer for your club and at the start of each season. A volunteer welcome pack is an important aspect of volunteer management. It gives the volunteer important information about their new role.

Volunteer Welcome Pack

This should include the following:

- Personal welcoming letter from the club chairperson
- Volunteer code of conduct setting out the basic rules about what is expected of volunteers
- Copy of their role description to help the volunteer understand what their role entails
- A list of club contacts
- A list of key club dates
- Dates and times of training for various teams if available
- Information on any upcoming training courses and costs
- Expense claim forms (if applicable)

A Sample Welcome Pack including all of the above is available on the following pages but it is important that you update these to reflect your clubs specific information and requirements.



[Insert Club Name Here]

[Insert Club Logo Here]

VOLUNTEER WELCOME PACK

[POSITION]

Date:



If found please return to:

[Insert name – for example the Secretary or Volunteer Co-ordinator]

[Insert their position]

[Insert club name]

[Insert club address]

[Insert contact phone number/ email]



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Sample Welcome Letter

WELCOME to St Patrick's Ladies Gaelic Football Club! We hope that you will find your volunteering experience rewarding and that you enjoy your key role in our Club.

We would like to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt "Thank You!" We greatly appreciate your involvement with our club. Thank you in advance so much for your time and hard work on behalf of St Patrick's and I cannot thank you enough for your invaluable contributions you are about to give as a volunteer.

In order to make your club membership more meaningful, I strongly encourage you to make every effort to involve yourself and your family and friends in all other club activities also. Our intentions are to include the interests of all our members and we are always open to new ideas. We plan regular activities such as family fun days, holiday parties, social events, training workshops and other fun activities. We have a host of committees in the club also that welcome membership participation. Lists of our committees are printed on our club noticeboard and I have also included contacts for committees with this letter. Each talent that you can share with the club will only make the club stronger.

We have our Annual General Meeting in November every year and executive committee meetings take place on the first Monday of every month should you have anything that you need to raise in the club. Notice of these meetings with dates and times will be listed in the Club Notes in advance of the meetings.

St Patrick's Ladies Gaelic Football Club is your club. Our members, the Club and you will greatly benefit from your active participation. Again, WELCOME, and we're certainly looking forward to having you volunteering with us for the coming year!

Sincerely,
Mary Murphy, Chairperson



Club History

Insert Brief History of Your Club Here

About Our Club

Insert brief information on a background to your club and what your goals and objectives so to give an insight to your new volunteer and allow them to see where they will assist in achieving these.



Benefits of Joining Our Club (Example)

- Allow you to spend time with your children
- Make new friends and have fun
- Have access to free training and resources
- Learn and share new skills
- Increase your knowledge and improve skills
- Make a valuable contribution to the community
- Take on new challenges
- Explore a career whether new or existing with your new role
- Expand your personal experiences
- Set a good example for kids in the area
- Help reduce the costs for our club members
- Become part of a community and/or be a part of a club
- Maintain fitness through your involvement
- Guaranteed opportunities for recognition from our club
- Re-live childhood sporting memories

Contact Details

Below are the key contact details you will require in the club and please feel to contact anybody if you have any queries or issues.

Name	Role	Phone	Email
Mary Murphy	Volunteer Coordinator	087 - XXXXXXXX	someone@gmail.com



Code of Conduct

Insert your club code of conduct for the specific role. Samples of these are available in the LGFA Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Children.

Role Description

Insert the specific role description for the role that this volunteer is undertaking in your club. This will ensure that the new volunteer is clear on their role from the first day they begin.



Volunteer Charter

Insert your Club Volunteer Charter here. See sample charter below.

VOLUNTEER CHARTER



Supporting you, Supporting us!

Ladies Gaelic Football Association will ensure that volunteers will be.....

- Appreciated and have their voluntary contribution recognised
- Provided with supervision and support through a designated mentor system
- Provided with safe working conditions and offered appropriate training for their specific role
- Respected by all members of the Association
- Enriched from their experience in a fulfilling and positive manner
- Considered valuable members of the Association
- Informed about, and given the opportunity to play an active part in the Association as a whole
- Able to say 'no' and to leave without feeling guilty
- Treated fairly and not to experience discrimination
- Entrusted with meaningful duties and know what is expected from them in their role

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association asks of volunteers.....

- To respect the values and aims of the Association as outlined in our Strategic Plan and Code of Ethics and Good Practice
- To be reliable and committed to their role
- To attend essential training and support sessions
- To be honest if they are experiencing problems
- To respect the confidentiality of the club and the Association
- To treat all members, or people involved with or supporting the sport with respect and dignity

Becoming a volunteer.....

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association welcome people who are interested in volunteering on a regular, intermittent or on a one-off basis with any of the below skills:

Administration	Project Management	Refereeing
Website design and maintenance	Leadership	Supervision
Fund-raising	Journalism	First Aid
Event organising	Coaching	

If you have a skill which is not listed and you feel the Association may benefit from it, please feel free to contact us also.

To learn more about volunteering or to become a volunteer for the Ladies Gaelic Football Association, please contact your nearest Club.
To find out your nearest club, please contact Paula Prunty, National Games Development Officer on (01) 8363156 or email: paula@ladiesgaelic.ie

Ladies Gaelic Football Association
Level 6, Cusack Stand Croke Park, Dublin 3
Tel: (01) 8363156 Fax: (01) 8363111

Supporting you, Supporting us!



Training Information/Key Dates

Insert dates of upcoming training that the volunteer may avail of e.g. coaching courses, club officer training etc. You can also insert days and times of the various club activities in this section to give a full overview of activities to the volunteer.

Membership/Garda Vetting

If the volunteer is not already a member of your club you can insert information here and how to become a member and the cost of same. Also if the volunteer has not submitted Garda clearance forms you can insert further details here also.



Expenses

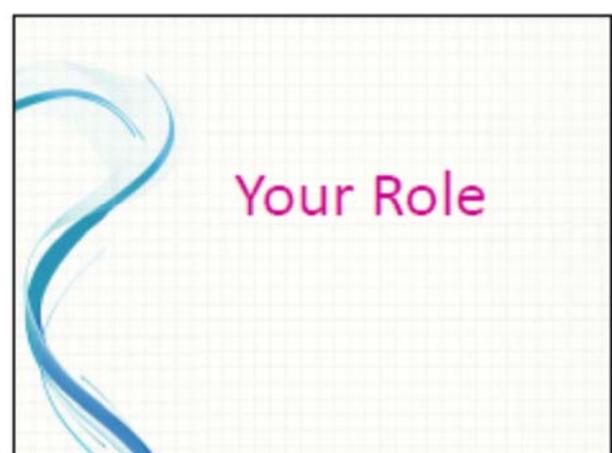
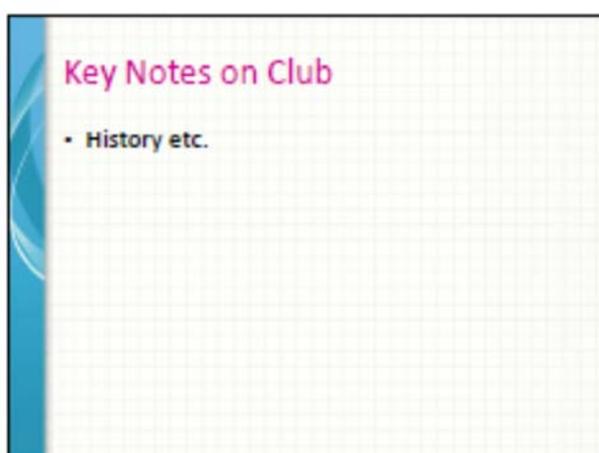
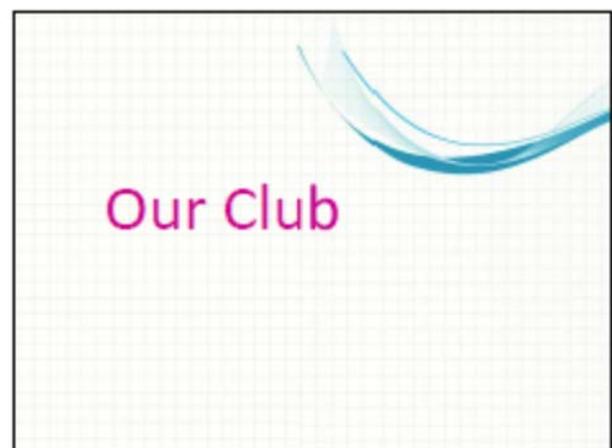
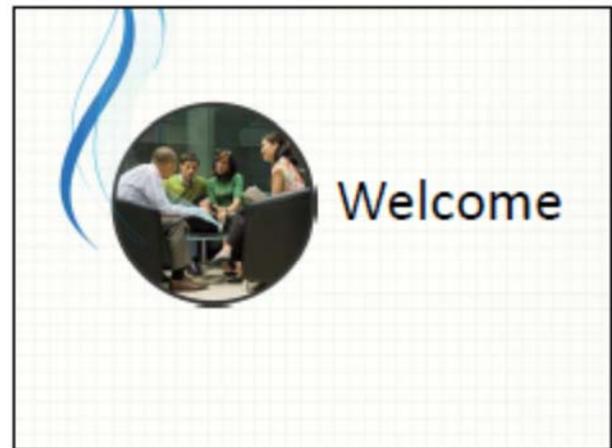
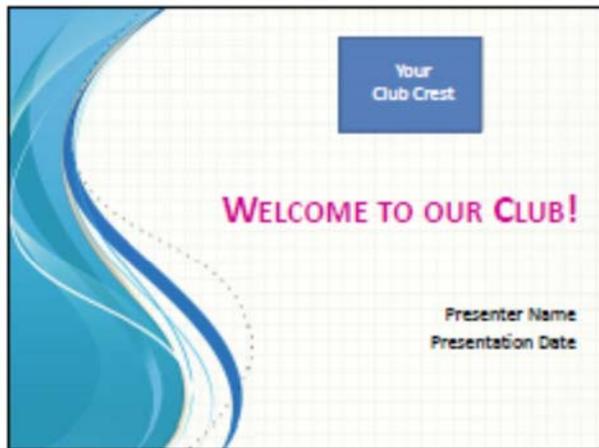
It is important that the volunteer is aware from the first time they join your club what the guidelines are in relation to expenses, if there are any. You do not want to receive an invoice at the end of the year for a large amount of expenditure when your volunteers did not have the freedom to do this. Also you may have guidelines to reimburse volunteers for out of pocket expenses and it is important that they are included here if so and any sample claim forms.

Conflict Management and Grievance

It is essential that your volunteer knows what the steps are that they must take if they encounter any issues during their volunteering experience in your club. These short steps can be included here for the benefit of your volunteer.



INDUCTION PRESENTATION



Roles

Role	Description
Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Organise trainingDevelop all playersEtc.
Secretary	
Fundraising committee	

New Colleagues

Who's Who

Name	Role	Contact Information
Jim	Chairperson	Jim@company.com 087 XXXXXXXX
Dee	Senior Manager	Dee@company.com 87 XXXXXXXX
Mavis	PRO	Mavis@company.com 87 XXXXXXXX
Doug	School Liaison	Doug@company.com 87 XXXXXXXX

QUESTIONS?





APPENDICES

RETENTION



_____ Club

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN



Date _____

Volunteer Name	Role	Area Requiring Development	How this can be Achieved?	Date for Completion



MENTORING DESCRIPTION

<u>Purpose & Summary of the Role:</u>	The purpose of this role is to support the Mentee to set, work towards and achieve manageable goals to ensure they reach their volunteering potential. Additionally the Mentor may help the Mentee to deal with the transition to their new role, expectations from the club and become used to learning from other volunteers in the club.
<u>Recruitment Period</u>	Ongoing
<u>Time Commitment</u>	A minimum of once weekly contact, this can be face to face, phone or email
<u>Task Description</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the mentee to make an 'Action Plan' outlining their motivation and goals • Meet on a one to one or group basis to review the Mentee's progress towards their desired goals • Use questioning techniques to facilitate the Mentee's own thought processes in order to identify solutions and actions • Utilise active listening and communication skills to ensure the needs of the Mentee are being met within the mentoring relationship • Share relevant experiences/problems you have overcome (if appropriate) • Facilitate and encourage autonomous and enquiry-based learning, providing the Mentee with the tools to find their own answers • Sign-post the Mentee onto other supports in the club should this be necessary • Attend any training provided to ensure the you have the appropriate skills to support the Mentee in their journey
<u>Person Specification</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive understanding of club related activities • Strong communication skills • The ability to work unsupervised • Leadership skills • The ability to break down the role involved, and support the Mentee to have a thorough understanding of this role
<u>Skills & experience likely to be gained from the Role:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentors will develop the ability to reflect on their own learning • Mentors will be able to identify processes and



	<p>strategies to assist future learning and mentoring in the club</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the mentoring relationship Mentors will develop their communication, inter-personal and negotiation skills to a high level • Through the mentoring experience, Mentors will learn to collaborate with others to further their learning and ability to achieve their desired outcomes • Mentors will become skilled in seeking, valuing and utilising open feedback
<p><u>Contact Details for Recruitment</u></p>	<p>Please contact _____ in _____ Club for further details</p> <p>Phone:</p> <p>Email:</p>



_____ Club Mentoring Program

MENTEE ACTION PLAN (MAP)



Mentee's Name _____

Mentor's Name _____

Date _____

Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3
<i>Objective (based on need identified)</i>	<i>Objective (based on need identified)</i>	<i>Objective (based on need identified)</i>
<i>Mentor's Support</i>	<i>Mentor's Support</i>	<i>Mentor's Support</i>
<i>Supports and Barriers</i>	<i>Supports and Barriers</i>	<i>Supports and Barriers</i>
<i>Outcome (and date of completion)</i>	<i>Outcome (and date of completion)</i>	<i>Outcome (and date of completion)</i>
<i>Next steps to Reinforce Learning</i>	<i>Next steps to Reinforce Learning</i>	<i>Next steps to Reinforce Learning</i>



SAMPLE VOLUNTEER DATABASE

<i>Number</i>	<i>First Name</i>	<i>Surname</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Telephone</i>	<i>Mobile</i>	<i>Email</i>	<i>Twitter Handle</i>	<i>Role(s)</i>	<i>Days Available</i>	<i>Other Information</i>
1	Mary	Malone								
2	Emma	Murphy								
3	Paula	Kane								
4	Karen	Hanlon								
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										
11										
12										
13										
14										
15										
16										
17										
18										





APPENDICES

RECOGNITION

& REVIEW



Certificate of Recognition



Awarded to

_____ (VOLUNTEER NAME)

For your contribution to our club

_____ (CLUB NAME)

(CHAIRPERSON SIGNATURE) _____

(CHAIRPERSON'S NAME)

(DATE)

Your
Club Crest



SUCCESSION PLANNING TEMPLATE

Club Succession Plan (Year)



Position	CURRENT HOLDING	Trustworthy	Leadership	Initiative	Judgment	Planning & Organising	Teamwork	Commitment	Political Savvy	Local Contacts	Coaching Skills	Good with juvenile players	RECOMMENDATION
Chairperson													
Secretary													
Treasurer													
Registrar													
PRO													
Finance Committee x 3													
Senior Manager													
Senior Coach													
U12 Coach													



My Club Notes



