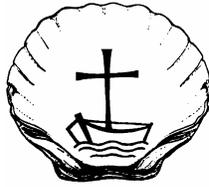
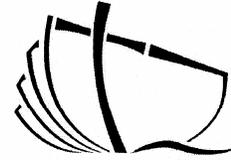




Merseyside Jewish
Community Care



CTMR



Diocese of Liverpool

FAITHFULLY VOLUNTEERING

*A good practice guide for faith communities & faith inspired projects
involved in Volunteering and for Volunteer Centres and
Councils for Voluntary Service who work with them*

Produced by Church & Society

In collaboration with:

Greater Merseyside ChangeUp Consortium
Liverpool Volunteer Centre
Churches Together in the Merseyside Region
Merseyside Jewish Community Care
Liverpool Community Spirit

The Greater Merseyside ChangeUp Consortium funded the production of this guide
as an aim to develop good practice in Volunteering.



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FOREWORD

This guide builds on work I started to write when I was working at what was the Birmingham Volunteer Bureau.

However that was built on foundations of paid employment with Churches Together in Birmingham, the Churches Community Work Alliance and the Churches Commission for Racial Justice, as well as moonlighting as a trustee of various charities, notably the Roman Catholic National Council for Lay Associations (which gather the various lay organisation like the Union of Catholic Mothers and St Vincent de Paul).

This Guide has developed slowly in the Church of England Diocese of Liverpool over the past seven years and ChangeUp gave us a real impetus to develop and expand it. I am grateful to the partners who have advised on the pack:

- Merseyside Jewish Community Care
- Liverpool Community Spirit
- Volunteer Centre Liverpool
- Churches Together in the Merseyside Region
- The ChangeUp Staff

As well as others who have participated in consultations and made valuable comments notably:

- Listening Ear (Merseyside)
- Volunteer Centre Sefton
- Volunteer Centre Halton

As we worked through it nine guidelines turned to the Judaeo-Christian “ten” ... checklists extended to double the length ... and twenty questions became inflated to twenty five ... so it went on. However any errors are mine - please let us know!

I hope that we may build on this guide at a time when the role of faith communities is being recognised and the ministry responsible for the Voluntary, Community & Faith sector is now of Cabinet Rank. Greater Merseyside has much to share and much to celebrate.

This guide is also a tribute to the inclusive, collaborative and energetic work of the Merseyside ChangeUp Consortium which I have had the honour to chair.

Ultan Russell
Senior Officer, Church & Society

INTRODUCTION

In a faith community nearly everyone is a volunteer: the members of the managing council, youth leaders, visitors, Boards and Committees - nowadays there are many volunteers serving as priests, pastors or congregational leaders.

Faith communities demonstrate a real partnership of paid and unpaid, professional and enthusiast. It becomes different if you involve people from other faith community in your work serving your community and your neighbourhood. It changes the dynamic, it changes the way you communicate, and it changes the way you run.

When we seek to serve the local community, problems and opportunities emerge and lots of complex issues need to be addressed.

This pack really focuses on using volunteers outside our particular local faith community although many of the good practice guidelines apply in all circumstances. There is a need to challenge the way faith communities operate and the expectations of their volunteers so there may be something in this pack for everyone.

If you start a project for the elderly you may be happy to have outside help from the local community, or if it were an advice centre, you may want to draw them from farther a field. What about expenses? How should they be involved, should they be members of our faith community, believers, or sympathetic? Should we train them? Are they insured? These are questions you need to ask before involving volunteers in a project.

Using volunteers on projects is a way to celebrate the gifts in your congregation and also to recognise that faith communities are community resources, which want to reach out.

The language used may seem strange to some faith communities. We have used the term project to cover any grouping whether part of the management structure of a faith community or an independent faith-inspired charity involving volunteers.

Finally we apologise if there is repetition but we have deliberately mentioned matters whenever they are relevant. In addition you may be just consulting one section so we have tried to include the information there rather than too much cross referencing.

The rest of this pack tries to give you ideas, a CD is enclosed for you to use for your own purposes please use freely but acknowledge the source! Please let us have feedback so that we can improve and revise this pack.

Every blessing in your work!

QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU START

Introduction

These questions need studying. Many pointers are given in other sections of the pack but it is vital that you ask the questions before you start.

You might like to reproduce this section and circulate the questionnaire to all those who will be involved in taking the decisions about developing your volunteering programme. You might also consider revisiting the questions as part of a periodic review of your work and the way you involve volunteers in your project.

The Questions

1. Why are you recruiting volunteers?
2. Do you have sufficient work for them to do? Will you be involving volunteers on a short term, time limited or a long term basis?
3. Is your faith community (the ministers, leaders, council, members, etc) supportive of involving volunteers in the project?
4. Are those currently involved in your project, at all levels, supportive of involving volunteers in the project?
5. Are they clear about the implications and the tensions that might exist between volunteers from the faith community working on a project and new volunteers who come in from outside?
6. Are there worries that the trustees/leadership will lose control when involving outsiders or non-believers?
7. What if funders require equal opportunities policies that may upset or be against the tenets of your faith?
8. Have you a budget for volunteers? Is it based on realistic costings? Does the management-body think that using volunteers means no costs at all?
9. Do similar faith inspired initiatives in your area involve volunteers? What is their experience? Have you visited them and discussed what it entails?
10. Have you looked at legal implications (e.g. the requirement to have indemnity insurance if you are giving advice, insurance cover for injury to volunteers or clients on the premises, or implications if you use people to drive vehicles)?
11. What about confidentiality (e.g. for a listening or a counselling project)?

12. What about safety (e.g. notably minibuses, parent/toddler's group or sport activities)?
13. What special problems might volunteers face (like safety or health risks, advice liability or making home visits)?
14. Volunteers bring new dimensions, new skills and enthusiasm. Can your faith community or project cope with change? Can it cope with non-believers or people from a different faith tradition working within it? Can they cope with you?
15. Have you allocated staff time or a trustee or leader to manage volunteers? Have they had appropriate training?
16. Will you have someone responsible for ensuring that volunteers are trained properly?
17. Have you estimated the staff time required to manage volunteers?
18. Have you space for volunteers and sufficient extra equipment?
19. How will those who you serve, users, members, the local community, etc. react to involvement of volunteers? Have you asked them?
20. How will your funders react to the involvement of volunteers? Have you checked with them?
21. Do you need specialist advice (e.g. national or regional religious bodies, Volunteer Centre, or specialist agencies)?
22. Does the congregation see involving volunteers as a way to recruit members?
23. Do you want volunteers simply to save money on paid posts?
24. Are you starting the project, as short term funding is available - if so what happens when funding ends and users/clients/community/volunteers have become accustomed to volunteers' involvement and expect it to carry on?
25. Will ministers, leaders, members not directly involved in the project interfere inappropriately in the work which could adversely affect your volunteers?

A Warning

This exercise may produce a whole range of other questions about the way your organisation operates which are much wider than involving volunteers. The Charity Commission website has useful information on governance and trustees: www.charity-commission.gov.uk.

A trustee welcome pack (with much valuable information can be downloaded from: <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Library/publications/pdfs/welctrust.pdf>).

VOLUNTEER POLICY - KEY POINTS

The starting point when developing any new work that involves volunteers is your volunteer policy. It is a document that outlines why and how you plan to include volunteers. Producing a volunteer policy offers the opportunity to think about why you want to involve volunteers and what they can expect from your project.

It is important that you discuss what goes into it with existing members/those actively involved within your project to ensure everyone is clear about the aims and practicalities of the project. If the project is based in the premises of the faith community then you may need to involve the wider leadership so that everyone is clear about roles, responsibilities and boundaries.

What goes into a volunteer policy differs for different projects. You should consider including the following headings. More detailed information to help you think about these sections can be found later in this document.

- Introduction / Aims of the project
- Ethos and reference to links with sponsoring faith communities
- Recruitment, screening and selection
- Volunteer roles and responsibilities
- Expenses
- Induction & Training
- Supporting & Supervising Volunteers
- Insurance and Health & Safety
- Equal Opportunities
- Confidentiality

For some of these sections you may decide to refer to other policies e.g. Health and Safety Policy, but you should still look to include a summary in the volunteer policy. The Policy should be regularly reviewed in consultation with volunteers, staff and trustees.

An outline is produced on the next page, BUT this should not simply be cut and pasted into your set of policies but reviewed and adapted.

Many projects also create a Volunteer Agreement. This is a document given to volunteers that clearly explains what is expected of them and how they can expect to be treated.

More information can be found at:

<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/managingvolunteers/goodpracticebank/volunteerpolicies/>

A MODEL VOLUNTEER POLICY

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All volunteers operate within the context of our Equal Opportunities Policy for which they will receive appropriate support and training.

MANAGEMENT, SUPPORT & SUPERVISION

We demonstrate our commitment by having a person to manage our volunteers.

There will be a clear process of assessing the performance of volunteers and offering them support in training and personal development.

ADEQUATE WRITTEN INFORMATION

All information relevant to volunteers will be contained in a handbook. The Handbook will be revised and updated in consultation with our volunteers.

INSURANCE, HEALTH & SAFETY

Volunteers will be covered by our insurance policies and reimbursed if they incur costs. Volunteers will be trained and updated on our Health & Safety Policy.

EXPENSES

Volunteers will be entitled to reimbursement of travel and other legitimate expenses at rates reviewed annually.

PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Volunteers are vital to the delivery of the service and thus will be involved in the decision-making processes of the project.

TRAINING

All volunteers must receive sufficient training to fulfil their role. Volunteers will be encouraged to take further training appropriate for their roles.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All partners are bound by the Confidentiality Agreement, which applies to our clients, our work methods and on colleagues (volunteers, staff & trustees).

PARTNERSHIP

We are committed to partnership with our volunteers. In return we expect them to respect our ethos as a faith inspired project and our religious beliefs and practices.

COSTING A VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

Think Carefully

It's important to appreciate that although volunteers give their time for free, there are costs involved in any volunteer project. Here are a few pointers:

Setup Costs

- Will you need additional furniture for volunteers, e.g. desks, chairs, etc?
- Will you need more equipment (e.g. computers, phone-lines, etc,)?
- You will probably need more staff time/trustee or management committee input in the initial stages to get things started.
- Printing & advertising costs must be allowed for: (e.g. simple posters or adverts in the local press).

Running Costs

- Do assume that all volunteers need reimbursement of expenses.
- Do not overlook the costs of insuring volunteers.
- Think about the cost of training volunteers and consider in-service training and training on new developments, changes in legislation, etc.
- Consider who will manage and support the volunteers and what this will cost your project.

Ensure that you have budgeted for all aspects of the programme. If your project is unable to meet the costs you may be able to apply for funding, although it is important to consider the implications of involving external funding.

A good starting point for finding potential funders is your local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) also known by various other titles including Council for Voluntary Action, or your Rural Community Council (RCC). Your Volunteer Centre may also be able to give some guidance on training specific to volunteering.

You will find contact details for Greater Merseyside and surrounding areas at the end of this guide.

In addition key bodies in your own faith community at regional and national level may be able to help.

Your Invisible Income

Background: It may seem insulting to place cash value on volunteers but it is an item to include in reports, etc. In kind contributions of all types are regarded as significant by many funders.

Flat Rate Sums: Use a simple rate of £6 per hour as the value of every volunteer to your project. It soon adds up! This is, roughly speaking, our minimum wage plus National Insurance costs! So: 10 people giving 3 hours a week to help in a luncheon club for 50 weeks a year is a subsidy of £9,000.

Equivalent Rate Sums: If you have the resources then you could estimate the costs of each type of volunteer within your project. Paid counsellors, solicitors offering free legal advice, volunteer plumbers or drivers all have going rates for the job. This detailed way of operating was used in the Economic Impact Assessment for Faith in the Northwest - it was a method of working which relates well to statutory bodies and can give a real and highly cost effective impression of a project.

Full time Equivalents: Another method of calculating is in terms of full-time workers. Staff have annual leave, do not work on public holidays, get sick, have medicals, compassionate leave and work, say, a 36-hour week. Most clergy, rabbis, priests and lay workers do more but low figures increase your case! An easy calculation is that workers do 1,600 hours a year. Calculate your volunteers' hours, divide and determine a full-time equivalent.

Descriptive Method: Volunteers enable you to diversify the work force and support/target new client groups. You will have examples, stories and numbers to put into Annual Reports. Another method is to list the volunteers and the time they give, for example, a solicitor who runs an advice session 3 hours a week, a chef spending 12 hours a week cooking lunches.

Management Committee/Trustees: Estimate the contribution - the length of meetings, the time spent reading and preparing for meetings or on the phone.

REFLECTIONS FROM A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

*All suffering comes from the wish for your own happiness.
Perfect Buddhas are born from the thought to help others.*

“The 37 Practices of a Bodhisattva”, by Ngolchu Thogme Rinpoche

RECRUITMENT

GOOD NEWS SPREADS

Most volunteers come by word of mouth. How often do the members of the women's group get helpers from other places of worship or their neighbours who are impressed by the community outreach of the church? This is obviously easier when you have a project to enthuse about rather than one that has not got off the ground yet.

A long list of places to go is included on the next page. A lot of what is referred to in this pack is about long term volunteers but getting short term volunteers is easier by spreading good news in this or other ways. The danger of relying only on word of mouth recruitment is that you will be unlikely to involve volunteers from different backgrounds, which can limit the development of your project and contribute to its perception as "not for me" in some potential volunteers.

IF YOU ALREADY INVOLVE VOLUNTEERS THEN USE YOUR CURRENT TEAM!

Ask your present volunteers if they can approach anyone who might help. This can be a particularly good way to get short-term volunteers or helpers for fund-raising events as friends and family will help on a one off basis quite often!

PROFESSIONAL HELP

Your Volunteer Centre or Council for Voluntary Service/Voluntary Action/Rural Community Council may organise training courses on publicity - their addresses for Merseyside and surrounding areas are included at the end of this pack.

LOCAL ADVERTISING

Many supermarkets have community notice-boards, as do neighbouring worship centres, community centres, schools and leisure centres, libraries, newsagents, corner shops or garages. Make sure you change the advert and revise it regularly. Ensure that it is a clean poster (change regularly if dog-eared or covered in graffiti) with up to date information.

These are very useful if you want local volunteers. They may be a rich source for one off events like fun runs or fetes. Remember to have interesting posters and remove them when they are outdated. Put a sign in your windows saying: *Volunteers Needed!*

YOUR LOCAL FREEBIE

The local free newspapers are helpful and approachable, particularly if your volunteer needs could link to something which is photogenic, and of local interest. You may want to tell them about your project and your faith community's other activities regularly so consider having a press contact.

PRESS RELEASES

Producing press releases and building links with the media has spin offs for your work. Some projects pay to advertise in the local press or even the Guardian. Keep the message simple. Get someone who is not too involved to check your promotional literature to see that it is clear and free of jargon. Representative Council, Synod, etc. may be clear to you but clear as mud to others.

When recruiting for genuine emergencies (like the Tsunami or a famine) people will respond but this is not the case if you have just not planned ahead!

LIKELY PLACES TO RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS

Research indicates that most volunteers still come by word of mouth - if you treat volunteers well they really will attract others! But here is a very long list of other ideas - you may have more to add - indeed it could be a fun exercise to brainstorm with your colleagues and see how many of these and others you can identify yourselves.

There is a great deal of overlap but sometimes people can overlook the obvious. So here goes:

- Other branches of your particular faith group
- Wider decision making bodies serving your religious traditions as well as interchurch and interfaith bodies
- Your local Volunteer Centre
- Faith publications (regional or national) notably for unusual projects or projects needing volunteers with specific skills
- Faith inspired Secondary Schools, Sixth Form Colleges and University Colleges where you may be able to forge links with the chaplain, and staff responsible for pastoral work or religious education
- Local secondary schools, Student Community Action Groups at Colleges and Universities and religious societies of students which are often very active
- Community centres, youth clubs/centres and tenants' halls
- Pre retirement courses
- Building links with local businesses and linking with bodies like Business in the Community (BitC) who may know of companies committed to employee volunteering
- Clinics and doctors' surgeries
- Job Centres, Job Clubs, rehabilitation centres, etc.

- Lions, Rotary Clubs, Soroptimists, Rotaract, etc.
- Uniformed youth organisations, notably for short term and one off activities
- Libraries, council offices, police stations, etc
- Local radio and, where you have it, local community television (most will have staff who specialise in community affairs and in religion)
- Specialist organisations, self help groups and professional agencies in your area relevant to your work
- Post offices, garages, supermarkets and corner shops
- Sporting and other types of clubs which are often keen to support/promote local charities
- Advice and information organisations like CAB
- Talks to specialist/relevant audiences, notably if you need specialist volunteers
- Exhibitions either static in a library or shop or mobile for a club/school
- Leaflets, which can be for wide circulation or customised for different audiences
- Materials in different languages notably when members of your faith community may have a first language other than English (use volunteers who speak community languages to support their work in their communities)
- New technology like a web site (keep it updated and interesting) and PowerPoint displays (with little text and lots of photos!)
- Open days at your centre or project
- Freebies who may write an article or publish a picture or letter that you send them (pictures of interesting events are really useful)
- Stunts like floats
- Delivering leaflets in the neighbourhood where you are based
- Circulate leaflets to your neighbouring churches, gurdwaras, synagogues, etc.

SELECTION

A. REASONABLE RESTRICTIONS

Potential volunteers must not be rejected due to non-relevant criminal convictions, mental health problems or other disabilities. Your policy should be clear to all involved and explained when recruiting.

Arguments like *other volunteers might not like it* are unacceptable - such attitudes must be challenged. Equal Opportunities training may be needed.

Ex-offenders often want to help prevent others committing crime and make excellent volunteers. The same applies to ex drug addicts and people who have had mental health problems.

There are a number of instances where restrictions are justified:

- **Ethnicity:** Where members of a particular ethnic group are needed for the work.
- **Self help groups** where membership is restricted to those with a certain disability or shared experience (e.g. widowed people or ex drug addicts).
- **Faith communities and faith inspired projects:** We have a section on this.
- **Age restrictions:** where these may be laid down by law.
- **Age Requirements:** Youth projects may only want people in a certain age range (Millennium Volunteers) or people over retirement age to work on an advocacy project for and with retired people. Also
- **Driving Insurance Restrictions** - most insurance companies require volunteer drivers to hold clean licences and be aged between 25 and 75 (some Companies cover drivers under 25 notably for student or youth projects) but premiums may be higher and you may be able to get senior citizens who are drivers already with cover if they join RSVP (Retired & Senior Volunteer Programme of Community Service Volunteers). Their address is: 237 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9NJ (Tel: 020 7643 1385).
- **Finance & Legal Restrictions** e.g. Credit Union directors, trustees/directors of companies may not be undischarged bankrupts or have committed certain offences of a financial nature. Remember ex offenders who has committed such offences can be involved as ordinary volunteers and supporting /empowering them may assist in rehabilitation and personal development.
- **Other Criminal Activity:** These would depend on the project. This relates to the section on the Criminal Records Bureau. Here specialist advice may be needed.

- **Qualifications or training** is required, although this is unlikely to be the case for the vast majority of volunteering roles. Literacy and numeracy may be issues but check that this is really required (with proper supervision is it essential on practical projects?). Interpreting programmes will search for people with particular language skills (though this may be qualifications, training or experience).
- **Health restrictions** may apply in certain cases but explore thoroughly that this is the case with the potential volunteer. Try to include people with specific needs and take expert advice if necessary. When discussing roles and responsibilities with potential volunteers these issues should be explored openly and positively.
- **Gender:** Women's refuges are entitled to recruit females. Single sex sports or youth groups may want volunteers of the same gender. For some ethnic, cultural and faith communities it is critical that visitors are of the same gender where there is close contact on home visits, teaching and other projects.
- **Experience:** you may need those with genuine experience of disability, parenting, bereavement or mountaineering
- **Geographical:** some community based projects may be seeking local volunteers not just to save money but because this is critical to their work.

A QUOTATION FROM THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen, to loose the chains of injustice and untie the chords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?

Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter?

When you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away your own flesh and blood.

Isaiah 58:6-7

B. PRE SELECTION

Background

Information, application forms or a pack could be sent out before hand. This may reduce pressure on certain people at an early stage and they can opt out; it can also appear overly bureaucratic and be off-putting to people if too much information is included. So think carefully.

How you approach this depends on the project thus detailed documentation is more appropriate, say, for advice, counselling or caring groups. For others you may consider completing forms as part of an initial face to face discussion; this is recommended where possible, as it removes one of the barriers to involvement.

Remember that most people want personal contact with a project before they start to complete paperwork.

For some specialist projects application forms may be completed and references taken up, CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) or other checks made before the potential volunteer visits your project - some agencies have informal interviews.

Other pre selection ideas include regular open days, videos, slide shows, presentations or tours of your premises and remember to involve existing volunteers.

Remember that thoroughness is vital notably when people are involved in working with children and vulnerable adults.

Once somebody has expressed an interest in your project it is usual to invite them to meet with you to discuss the volunteer role. This is often referred to as the interview although it is important to remember this is not the same as the selection process for a paid position.

Remember you are not selecting the best candidate for a single position but assessing the suitability of each individual to contribute to your project. It is also a chance for the volunteer to make sure the role is right for them; this should not be an overly formal process.

Key Areas to Consider

You may want to cover the following:-

1. Equal Opportunities must be explored carefully. First ensure that commitment is demonstrated and that interviewees do not have preconceived ideas.
2. The importance of confidentiality must be explored. Stress the information given by potential volunteers is confidential.
3. Discover how they heard about you. This helps to put them at ease.
4. If the role is not core to your activity then check whether they are more concerned about working with you or particular types of work.
5. Explore weaknesses and strengths positively - to see if support/training is needed.
6. What is the person's availability (hours, days, short-term, long-term, regular days and times, flexibility)? How does this compare with what you are looking for?
7. What is their knowledge of the client group? How realistic is it?
8. Do they understand and respect your religious ethos?
9. Stress your obligation to support, train & help volunteers. Explain about induction, trial periods, etc.
10. When tricky questions are asked by interviewees say you will check and let them know!
11. If you are running a community project - how local do you want your volunteers to be?
12. What are their positive motivations? Want to help others? Have expertise to use? Lonely, unemployed or bored? Suggested by friend or colleague? Gain new experiences? Previous experience? Religious commitment?
13. What are their negative motivations? Uncompromising/insensitive views? On a course? Want to work on their terms? An inappropriate or naive understanding? Unable or unwilling to listen? Want to convert your clients?
14. Give them a chance to ask questions and opt out. This can be facilitated by a further interview, induction training, etc. See if they have concerns, questions or comments.
15. Let them get a feel of the centre/project by a tour and meeting volunteers.

C. TAKING UP REFERENCES / TRIAL PERIOD

References are a useful way of determining suitability of volunteers, although some people will struggle to find two referees.

People who have committed offences or have a disability are normally open about it particularly where you need to know. Often they have experienced rejection and are nervous; be sensitive and supportive.

A trial period is a very useful way for both the volunteer and the project to determine if the “match” is a suitable one for them. It is an inclusive and supportive way of trying to involve people who maybe cannot provide references. This could include:

- people who have been out of work for a long period
- people who are unable to work
- people with long-term mental or physical health problems
- refugees/asylum seekers who may have a range of professional expertise, experience and language skills which may be invaluable.

There is still a danger in making assumptions about people - give potential volunteers the chance to try.

Remember face to face discussion is better than filling in a form.

REFLECTIONS FROM A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

If you think about yourself you have problems.

If you think about others you have exciting tasks and challenges.

Lama Ole Nydahl

SCREENING & THE CRIMINAL RECORDS BUREAU (CRB)

Faith communities and faith inspired projects have a duty to ensure that children and Vulnerable Adults are safe and that there is no possibility of them being abused.

Volunteers involved on a project need to have had the appropriate training, supervision and should understand the mechanisms to ensure that no false allegations can be made against them.

The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) run searches on volunteers to check for past convictions. It is sometimes a useful tool in helping you screen volunteers to protect others involved in the project. However remember that the system is not fool proof and a CRB check alone is not sufficient to protect children and vulnerable adults. It is only a small part of a screening and ongoing monitoring process. It is better, where possible to set up the project so that no volunteer is left alone and thus has unsupervised contact.

If your volunteer role does require CRB checks they are offered free for volunteers. For projects requiring less than 100 checks a year you apply for the check through an umbrella body; these are bodies registered with the CRB to administer the process.

The CRB website maintains a database of umbrella bodies. Although checks are free for volunteers some umbrella bodies may charge you a small fee for each check.

Many religious umbrella bodies like Anglican and Roman Catholic Dioceses will process CRB applications for their churches and projects.

All the major faith communities have detailed guidelines covering this area and you should check that you conform to these. In addition you should be aware of the procedures in place to cover your local authority.

Remember that by undertaking CRB checks you have a duty to keep the information confidential. You must also ensure that you have a transparent policy outlining what convictions you consider would prevent an individual volunteering with you. It is not acceptable to reject a volunteer because of an irrelevant conviction.

An overview of issues relating to CRB checks can be found at:

<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/managingvolunteers/information/on-lineinformationsheets/screeningandpolicechecking.htm>

More detailed information and contacts for local agents can be found at:

<http://www.crb.gov.uk/>

EXPENSES - GENERAL

THE DECISION TO REIMBURSE EXPENSES

Faith communities and projects wishing to involve volunteers need to reflect carefully on this. If you do not pay expenses then you should be clear from the outset. If you are only recruiting local volunteers then it is often reasonable not to pay travel expenses, but you may wish to make exceptions for anyone who needs to use a taxi, e.g. because of a physical disability or sensory impairment or for personal safety reasons.

Work through the issues with the Trustees/Management Committee so that everyone is clear about what to say to volunteers and ensure that the policy is applied to all volunteers. You may decide that you cannot reimburse expenses or that you will only refund travel at public transport rates - just be clear, consistent and cost it!

WHAT CAN YOU REIMBURSE

Costing a volunteer programme may increase your chances of getting funded by trusts or statutory agencies as they will see that you have acted professionally. Travel is covered in the next section.

Other general expenses which can be reimbursed:

- **Responsibilities for caring:** You can reimburse/contribute to any additional costs that volunteers incur (if they need say, a child minder while they do their volunteering or someone to care for an infirm relative).
- **Home expenses:** If a volunteer uses their home for meetings, supplies refreshments, uses their telephone, etc. then you can reimburse these costs.
- **Subsistence:** If volunteers are with you all day then it is acceptable to supply them with lunch or give them a reasonable contribution towards buying some. We suggest that you should offer all volunteers free tea, coffee, biscuits, etc. Obviously if you run luncheon clubs or volunteers help at meetings with meals it is acceptable to give them a free meal.
- **Protective clothing:** Outdoor, removal & DIY projects should supply protective clothing (rainwear, boots, etc.) or reimburse volunteers who buy their own.
- **Uniforms:** Some practical and caring projects require volunteers to wear uniforms. These should be provided by the project.
- **Cleaning:** If volunteers have to wear protective clothing or uniforms then the project should either have them cleaned or pay volunteers a contribution to cleaning.

- **Going to conferences and meetings:** If a volunteer represents you at a conference then you should pay all their travel, accommodation and registration fees. If it is a long journey then you should contribute towards subsistence (coffee and a sandwich on the train are expensive if you are on Benefits!).
- **Training:** If you want a volunteer to undertake training to enhance their performance with your project then you should consider paying for the course, the books, travel and related costs (like mailing assignments). Sending volunteers on relevant training not only helps with their personal development but also increases the quality of volunteers. It may be that you could get people to lead training based at your Centre, which can end up being cheaper than going elsewhere.
- **Emergencies** and odd occurrences: Little sums mount up, particularly if the volunteer is on benefits, for example if a volunteer rips their clothes on your equipment or one of your pens leak then you can pay for a new garment or reimburse for a dry-cleaning bill.
- **Social events:** It is a legitimate expense to take volunteers to events like staff parties, etc.
- **Gifts:** A box of chocolates at New Year or Christmas or a gift at Passover is one thing but do not give volunteers cash presents. Small gifts for long service, special occasions, etc. would be fine too, but not gifts which amount to an honorarium. It affects the concept of volunteering and it can affect those on benefits.

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Five Tips

Consider these carefully:

- Do not try to force unemployed volunteers to buy tickets for events, etc. They probably do not have spare cash and can be acutely embarrassed. Faith inspired projects for which fund-raising initiatives come as second nature often overlook this.
- Assume that the refund of expenses for your volunteers is the norm. Remember if people claim expenses and wish to donate it back to a charity then the charity can claim gift aid.
- Always make it a simple and clear process for claiming expenses
- Pay expenses regularly (daily or weekly) as volunteers on low income need the money back quickly.
- Never make ex. gratia payments or give honoraria - this can land you and volunteers with tax, benefit, or NI problems.

EXPENSES - TRAVEL

TRAVEL BY PRIVATE TRANSPORT

General: You should reimburse volunteer expenses at agreed rates. These should be based on mileage rates not ex gratia payments per day or per journey. The Inland Revenue defines the maximum rates payable. If you pay above these rates then the volunteer becomes liable for tax.

We would advise you to avoid paying above Inland Revenue rates. The same rate of travel expenses can be applied to volunteers and staff. This is simple and fair.

Offer mileage to users of motor bikes and pedal bikes! They need helmets and must be properly insured. Tyres, etc. and ultimately the bike needs to be replaced. They are also a cheaper source and indicate an environmental conscience, which faith inspired projects, would want to support.

Insurance: If the volunteer is required to transport people, make home visiting, or move goods then this may mean an extra premium. It is legitimate for the host project to refund this.

It is advisable for volunteers to inform their insurance companies that they volunteer and use their vehicle to travel to/from the project. It should not mean paying an additional premium but it may. The insurance policy may be invalidated if you do not tell the company.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT & TAXIS

Taxi: The host project may sanction the use of taxis perhaps when a volunteer works in the evening or has a disability.

Bus & Train: Reimbursement of fares is normal. If volunteers use a travel pass then payment at a negotiated level for each day of volunteering is reasonable.

Remember: reimbursement means that you can only pay when volunteers attend. You should not reimburse travel expenses as ex gratia payments (e.g. all volunteers get £2 per day). Travel expenses need to be justified.

We stress again that you may be asked to account for this. So if someone walks down the road to volunteer then there is no cost! Volunteers may be questioned for tax or benefits on expenses. Receipts, tickets or photocopying the travel pass should cover this. It will help the volunteer and your internal auditing systems.

Information on mileage rates is available from the Inland Revenue's website at their Employers Bulletin: <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/pdfs/empbull8.pdf>.

Inland Revenue and HM Customs & Excise have merged (now called HM Revenue & Customs) so it is not as easy to navigate. The website address is www.hmrc.gov.uk.

PARTICIPATION & PARTNERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

It is vital that your volunteers feel respected, needed and able to participate in your project. Trust and openness are key elements as is a policy on volunteering and clear guidelines for volunteers (an agreement and an information file).

CONSULTATION

There is sometimes a tendency to ignore or even disparage volunteers. Comments like they are only volunteers are heard. In many projects volunteers have greater continuity than staff! This is certainly the case with the many luncheon clubs run by faith communities who usually draw on their women's groups while faith based uniform organisations are the major youth/children's work providers in some areas!

We recommend that faith-inspired projects should allocate places for volunteers on the management committees. Many funders including the Church Urban Fund and the Big Lottery Fund will look for this in your grant applications. We hope that you will do it because you want to not just because funders expect it.

This should form part of volunteers' meetings, support and supervision sessions as well as formal processes, say, when a major reorganisation is taking place. Often people overlook simple things like this.

Consultation is not just about courtesy. It recognises that volunteers have skills and a valid contribution to make to the decision-making processes.

Remember your volunteers who are not believers, or may come from another religious community or background and so avoid jargon.

PARTICIPATION

If your project is a separate charity established by a Trust Deed, Constitution or Memorandum and Articles of Association then volunteer and community representation should be written in to the Trustees' membership.

Volunteer representatives have a duty to report back to volunteers and to find out what the opinions of your volunteers are on the major issues affecting your work.

When you are revising your Constitution/Articles/Deed then we suggest that you include representatives of your volunteers on the management committee. Many funders will expect you to have an open and participative management structure, which should include your volunteers, users, the local community and others.

Faith communities believe in participation and helping people fulfil their potential, so you should want to involve your volunteers and not just do it to get funding!

CONFIDENTIALITY

BACKGROUND - A BASIS FOR INVOLVEMENT AND TRUST

Confidentiality affects all aspects of volunteer management. It does not just relate to information shared about a client! Problems arise notably:

- Personal information on volunteers is seen as public and often unnecessary detail about volunteers personal lives are widely shared among all the staff or members of the faith community. All volunteers have a right to privacy.
- Projects sometimes do not tell volunteers vital information (e.g. volunteer receptionists need to know that a client who regularly visits your centre has been violent when they were not on duty) - remember the old phrase a need to know basis?
- Volunteers are unsure to whom they can share and divulge confidential information. Counselling, listening and advice projects often have well developed guidelines on this.
- Leaders of faith communities and members of management committees often do not understand boundaries - they have no right to be told about confidential information just because of a position.
- The absence of clear guidelines in relation to protection issues affecting vulnerable adults and children.

TEN GUIDELINES

1. Volunteers need to be clear what amount of information they can share about their volunteering with friends and family. It is particularly important that members of your faith community working on the project do not share confidential information on clients with other members from your faith community.
2. Information on clients is normally confidential to the agency and often to the adviser (volunteer or staff) working with them.
3. Where volunteers have a caseload then they should have all the information available to them which is available to your paid staff.
4. If a volunteer or staff member shares a caseload then it must be clear to the client that the counsellor/adviser has to share all information with colleagues.
5. Situations when volunteers or staff reveal personal information (home address, etc.) need to be clear for their self protection.

6. Circumstances, if any, under which staff or volunteers may remove confidential information from the office must be clear.
7. Staff and volunteers should regard information gained about colleagues in the course of their activities as confidential.
8. Staff and volunteers should regard information gained about the project, its funding and its activities as confidential.
9. Staff and volunteers should only reveal information to clients about colleagues when the person affected knows that this will be done and it is essential.
10. Application forms and information on volunteers should be kept in a secure place (locked filing cabinet). Volunteers should know who has access to the information on them and they should be able to see the personal files that the project keeps on them.

SUGGESTED CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I will maintain strict confidentiality in my work. This relates to:

- revealing and discussing information about the clients;
- discussing the internal workings of the project;
- removing confidential information from the premises without permission;
- revealing and discussing information about colleagues

ISLAM & VOLUNTEERING:

And say (unto them): Act! Allah will behold your actions and (so will) His messenger (pbuh) and the Believers, and you will be brought back to the knower of the invisible and the visible, and He will tell you what you used to do.

Qu'ran chap 9: verse 105

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

BACKGROUND

So many of us talk of striving to be Equal Opportunities Employers/Agencies! There is often a danger that this can become a slogan with little substance.

Volunteers help you to demonstrate your commitment to Equal Opportunities by enabling you to recruit a wide range of participants (from minority ethnic communities, the gay community, under 25, etc.).

Remember - it is important to monitor your recruitment of volunteers not just the recruitment of staff!

FINITE RESOURCES AND REALISTIC GOALS

All projects work within finite resources. There is a limit to any policy - training, recruitment, equal opportunities, opening times, etc. Ask the following:

- Do we represent of the community we aim to serve?
- Do we listen to the community we try to serve?
- Do all partners (staff, trustees, users, volunteers) have a say in policy making?
- What are the financial implications of equal opportunities in recruitment)

Funding may be available, e.g. if you need to adapt offices for disabled access, buy specialist equipment. Your local Council for Voluntary Service, Voluntary Action/ Rural Community Council will be able to help.

EXCLUSIVE PRACTICES

Looking at volunteers we are aware of several issues, which affect them specifically:

- Projects that do not pay travel or related expenses
- Unnecessarily complex forms (are forms even needed?)
- Questions over criminal convictions, which are unjustified
- Narrow recruitment strategy that makes you look narrow and unwelcoming
- Ways of working and acting that exclude people who are not members or closely associated with your faith community when you have claimed that you are committed to involving them.

RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT

PRAYER, THOUGHT, AND REFLECTION AT THE START

Pray, discuss and reflect on the project you are undertaking. Reflect on the following questions and if the answer is no then you probably want to draw in volunteers from a range of groups and communities:

- Is it specifically religious? Obviously this is perfectly acceptable, but make this clear and remember that statutory bodies and many trusts will not fund specifically religious or missionary activities. Alternatively there are trusts which fund specifically religious or missionary activities! Funders and the community may get angry if you are not honest. To develop the family outreach of a Christian Church with a youth evangelist is your right and an enriching experience which is key to your role as a faith community but do not try to package it as anything other than a mission oriented initiative.
- Does your project require active members of your faith community?
- Do you feel that you must have members of your faith community with a specific interpretation of your scriptures or sacred writings/teachings? (Anti-abortion, opposed to divorce, Anglo Catholics, Reformed, Liberal, Orthodox, etc)

REMEMBER THE FINANCIAL NEEDS OF VOLUNTEERS

Remember that lots of members of faith communities are poor or unemployed. Just because you want to recruit believers for your counselling service or youth project should not mean you do not pay expenses.

OPENNESS IN LITERATURE AND RECRUITMENT

Be explicit in your literature about your religious base. This will probably attract people. However you will still need to sift them.

Seemingly religious people are found amongst criminals and child abusers so you still have to adopt careful sifting, monitoring and training policies.

You also need to ensure that volunteers from the congregation fulfil the same requirements as all other potential volunteers. Being an active member of a faith community does not make you a good listener, youth worker or counsellor!

If you run a professional faith inspired counselling, listening or advice project you need to check that the training of believers, who may come claiming to be experienced counsellors, is up to your standards. Your funders may also require that the volunteers reach externally recognised standards (like National Vocational Qualifications - NVQs) and accreditation by a professional body.

HEALTH & SAFETY

REMEMBER - YOU ARE LEGALLY LIABLE

You must maintain high standards no matter how small you are even if all you do is run a half day a week club. You have what is termed a duty of care for negligent acts of your volunteers plus the need to protect volunteers and clients.

The information contained here is just an introduction and a warning! Consult your broker or your insurance company.

HEALTH & SAFETY - THE CORE LEGISLATION

Health & Safety at Work Act 1974

You should have a copy of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, which states that you must write a Health & Safety policy. The act focuses on staff and employers - good practice would demand you treat volunteers as staff for this purpose.

Your premises must be safe otherwise volunteers, staff or visitors can sue you. Remember this is not just the worship centre but any halls, outside buildings, church-yards, car parks and do not forget home visiting, etc. If you share facilities then determine who is liable, and for what.

Never say it will not happen to us as small organisations like sports groups and community centres have been sued when unforeseen accidents occur.

Occupiers Liability Act of 1957

Under the Occupiers Liability Act of 1957 you must ensure that your premises are safe to visitors. If you use/rent other premises - check who is responsible.

SAFETY CHECKLIST

You must have a Health & Safety Policy, which includes reference to volunteers. The following should be carefully studied:

- All volunteers must have copies and understand your Health & Safety Policy! Breaches of it are very serious.
- Arrange fire drills at different days/times so all volunteers experience one
- Ensure volunteers undergoing specialist tasks are given training (for example - lifting furniture, moving wheelchairs, dealing with drunk/disruptive callers)
- Make all comments on health and safety in writing to avoid misunderstandings
- Everyone must know where first aid box(es) are and who the first aiders are.

SOURCES OF ADVICE

The act requires you to take reasonable care - this term is vague so be thorough and assume the worst!

There is an excellent source of advice namely the Health & Safety Executive. This provides an Information and Advice Line on 0845 345 0055. They produce useful free leaflets and have a publication ordering service on 01787 881165. You can buy the Acts mentioned from HMSO.

The Health and Safety Executive's website has free guides and information: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/index.htm> . While these are aimed at small businesses they have relevant information for voluntary/community organisations. You can also download their free leaflets on: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/leaflets.htm>

ROSPA has a document called Managing Occupational Road Risk in Voluntary Organisations. Although this is a pilot study it does have some useful information in. It is downloadable from: <http://www.rospa.com/morr/information/voluntary.htm>

ISLAM & VOLUNTEERING:

From Adu Hurairah who said that Allah's messenger said:

Charity is due upon every joint of a person on every day that the sun rises.

Administering justice between two people is an act of charity;

and to help a man concerning his riding beast by helping him on to it or lifting his luggage is an act of charity;

a good word is charity;

and every step which you take to prayer is charity;

and removing that which is harmful from the road is charity.

Hadeeth: Good Actions

INSURANCE - GENERAL

PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

This covers your project against claims arising from accidents to persons or damage to property. If you use other premises even if only for a half day then you must check that they have cover.

EMPLOYEE LIABILITY INSURANCE

You must have this if you employ staff - check where volunteers (perhaps students on placement or trainees on Government schemes) stand. You may be required to give detailed information on the types of volunteers that you involve, e.g. numbers, etc.

PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE

This will cover volunteers for injury arising from activities carried out on your behalf.

PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY

This is important for advice and counselling organisations that end up giving bad advice to clients. Ensure it covers your volunteers - you must be seen to have taken "reasonable care".

SPECIALIST POLICIES

Many agencies require other specialist policies (taking your volunteers skiing perhaps). Check policies cover volunteers at all venues for everything you ever do.

CONSULT YOUR INSURERS

Scrutinise your policies and any changes that may have happened! If you change the way you operate then check it with them. It is important to determine whether or not you are covered for activities both on and off your premises. In general insurance companies will be helpful.

There are faith based insurance companies who have real experience of volunteering and advising charities.

In addition your local Council for Voluntary Service/Volunteer Centre or Rural Community Council may be able to offer advice.

Remember to tell them everything that is out of the ordinary e.g. if your youth group goes on an outward bound trip for the first time when their normal activity is an evening meeting in a hall.

INSURANCE - VEHICLES

VEHICLES OWNED BY THE PROJECT

You need to check restrictions on your policy relating to volunteers. Many state you cannot use people under 25 or over 75 years of age, or require clean driving licences.

You may be able to get senior citizens who are drivers covered if they join RSVP (Retired & Senior Volunteer Programme which is a part of Community Service Volunteers). Some Companies may cover those under 25 although this may require an extra premium. It is your duty to check this and see they fulfil the requirements of the policy.

VEHICLES OWNED BY VOLUNTEERS: GETTING TO/FROM THE PROJECT

Volunteers should contact their insurers if they travel to their volunteering. This definitely should not involve an extra premium and may seem like an unnecessary precaution.

You could design a letter for your volunteers to send to their insurers explaining the situation. If a volunteer does have to pay an additional premium then the project can reimburse it as a legitimate expense. We stress that it is very unlikely.

USING VEHICLES IN VOLUNTEERING

If a volunteer uses their own transport to help you (do not forget vans, motorbikes and pedal bikes here!) then you must see a copy of their licence and insurance.

If a volunteer drives for you, collecting for a charity shop, taking people to hospital or delivering posters then they should not pay an extra premium as it is not for profit - however the insurers may feel differently so volunteers must check.

There are policies by which you can protect no claims bonuses for volunteers. This is a reasonable expense for you to pay. If you have volunteers who travel in connection with their volunteering with you, by motor or pedal bicycles, then they must wear helmets. If a volunteer is involved in a crash then you could still be held liable so consider taking out a Contingent Liability Policy.

ROSPA has a document called Managing Occupational Road Risk in Voluntary Organisations. Although a pilot study it does have some useful information. It is downloadable from: <http://www.rospa.com/morr/information/voluntary.htm> .

Mileage rates may be obtained from your Volunteer Centre of Council for Voluntary Service/Voluntary Action and they are in the Inland Revenue Employers Bulletin <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/pdfs/empbull8.pdf> . However the Inland Revenue and HM Customs & Excise have merged (now called HM Revenue & Customs) so it is not as easy to navigate. The website address is www.hmrc.gov.uk .

INDUCTION

INTRODUCTION

All volunteers will need induction into your project - you can explain how, why and where you operate.

However not everyone needs training (e.g. cooks or solicitors) but they must know how you tick. Thorough induction coupled with targeted and appropriate training breeds good staff and good volunteers.

A Volunteers' Handbook is an ideal method to cover a lot of this information. You can use it as the base of an induction session for new volunteers. It could be just a few loose leaf sheets in a folder, which are easily revised and replaced rather than a booklet.

INDUCTION - GETTING A *FEEL* OF YOUR PROJECT

Every project works differently; even moving from one scout group to another demands some induction, no matter how small.

Many projects have an induction programme common to all new volunteers, which ensures everyone is at the same level.

INDUCTION PROGRAMMES

In an induction programme assume ignorance but explain why! Four areas to cover are:

- **Introduction to your Ethos:** You should have a leaflet or paper outlining what you do, your aims and objectives and if necessary how you differ from similar projects/organisations in your field or area of activity.

This is vital if you have an overtly religious ethos. Be up front about it and explain it. If done in an open and enthusiastic way it is a useful tool for sharing our faith.

For example, catering at a guesthouse is different to helping at a luncheon club particularly if kosher, halal or vegetarian food has to be provided to fulfil religious requirements/practices, and bereavement counselling is different to careers advice.

Explanation and discussion on your approach to equal opportunities will be important here. Volunteers with experience of a different type of agency even in a similar field may find a great contrast - often this may need to be emphasised!

- **Introduction to your methods:** where you file, how you log phone calls, what resource books you use, are all important. This should be written down and explained to the volunteers - always explain that you may have to state the obvious!
- **Introduction to the Building/Project and its rules:** Show everyone where toilets, emergency exits, kettles, etc. are. Health & Safety is vital particularly, e.g. if you always have fire drills at certain times which means some volunteers are never present then you need to go through it with them!

For example, explain how to complete expense forms - you will have other examples. However you will have issues specific to your project which you should include here.

- **Introduction to your Users and your Community:** If you recruit volunteers from outside your neighbourhood then give them information that is relevant - e.g. about the housing or ethnic composition for a housing project, or the number of elderly for a day centre.

Avoid religious jargon and abbreviations as it is bad practice and not a good way to get people to understand about your faith and your community.

A CHRISTIAN PRAYER FOR HELPERS AT A SOUP KITCHEN IN AMERICA

*With a thankful heart I will set this table.
Today, O Lord, I serve you.*

*With a thankful heart I will prepare this food.
Today, O Lord, I serve you.*

*With a thankful heart I will stir this pot.
Today, O Lord, I serve you.*

*With a thankful heart I will bake this bread.
Today, O Lord, I serve you.*

*With a thankful heart I will fill these glasses.
Today, O Lord, I serve you.*

*With a thankful heart I will serve this meal.
Today, O Lord, I serve you.*

*With a thankful heart I will clean this kitchen.
Today, O Lord, I serve you.*

TRAINING

UPDATING YOUR VOLUNTEERS

You will wish to update your volunteers on changes (new contact addresses, legislation, moving to new premises, etc.).

New regulations may come in affecting your client group, the Disability Discrimination Act which needs mentioning but not training. Some ideas:

- A newsletter or regular letter to your volunteers (if you produce a congregational newsletter or magazine they may appreciate a copy even if they are not regular worshippers)
- If you have a small team of volunteers then tell them individually or by phone possibly supported by a letter
- Update them at Volunteers Meetings which are useful if held regularly
- Include relevant changes in written updates to you manual - perhaps loose leaf.

IN SERVICE OR CORE TRAINING - PRINCIPLES

Look at your project. See whether there are core elements, which apply to all new volunteers and you do not think might be covered by an induction. Many may require updating through in-service training. Here are a few pointers but you can probably expand the list for yourselves:

- Equal opportunities so everyone should be on the same level
- Rights and responsibilities of volunteers
- Basic listening skills (if you might require all volunteers to answer the phone in emergencies or at busy times)
- Health & Safety and first aid are other examples

TRAINING VOLUNTEERS

Many projects with substantial numbers of volunteers working alongside have their own training programmes. Some offer NVQs.

If you are starting a new project then we can suggest groups to contact for good practice models. It would be impossible in this short paper to go into detail about a precise training programme.

Your local Council for Voluntary Service/Voluntary Action, Rural Community Council or Volunteer Centre is a good starting point on specialist training.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

BACKGROUND

When you recruit volunteers a host of different reasons are given for wanting to volunteer - to help people, as part of their religious commitment, as a member of your worshipping community, they support your aims, something to do, time on their hands, wanting to do something different, to brush up on skills, want to help the church/synagogue/etc, came with a friend, to develop new skills, to gain experience. Nearly every reason is valid!

Volunteering is increasingly seen as helpful for those on Jobseeker's Allowance. This is recognised in a leaflet from the Employment Service JSAL7 called Jobseeker's Allowance - voluntary work when you are unemployed and it need not affect your benefits. This information aims to complement it.

When volunteers do a substantial number of hours with you or undertake specific tasks, then you might encourage them to design personal action plans about what they intend to do in the future. Obviously most of what is envisaged here is for long-term volunteers.

Projects react in different ways to other types of help, which is not pure volunteering. So you may have students on placement from school, university or theological college, you may have trainees on a Government scheme like New Deal. You need to determine appropriate ways for dealing with these different groups.

IDEAS TO DEVELOP THE SKILLS OF YOUR VOLUNTEERS

Developing NVQs (National Vocational Qualification) & other training:

Training courses benefit users, staff and volunteers. You should pay for your volunteers training.

Consider the possibility of getting your own training programme registered or look for relevant courses at colleges, or with training agencies for volunteers.

Contact with your local Learning & Skills Council for help on this if appropriate - their address is available from your local Council for Voluntary Service/Voluntary Action or Volunteer Centre.

Believers may come as volunteers as part of their faith commitment and you may want to let them know about training being offered on Merseyside by bodies like the Liverpool Diocese, Merseyside Jewish Community Care, Nugent Care, Hope College, Acorn Trust, Liverpool Community Spirit, to name but a few who might benefit them.

Drawing attention to vacancies and training courses in the press or on the grapevine

A simple signposting activity, which all those responsible for volunteers could assist with. You should know your volunteers and their potential so look out for them. Buy relevant newspapers like the Liverpool Echo or Jobs NW. Have all your local freebies on display for your volunteers to look at job advertisements.

Remember specialist papers, which are relevant to your specialist area of work or your faith community (like Community Care, Jewish Chronicle, Disability Now, Church Times, the Universe, etc.). Specialist papers and magazines are valuable background for volunteers to ready anyway.

Investing in Resources

If you have the resources then buy copies of relevant periodicals, books, videos, CD ROMS, computer programmes, etc. which your volunteers can borrow to develop their skills or even perhaps have group sessions.

Never overlook the skills that your volunteers possess and get them to network with each other -informal methods of training are often as good as the highly structured ones!

DISCOVERING FAITHFUL CAPITAL

One of the most powerful gifts that faith based organisations have to offer is that they are instructed to 'practise what they preach'. A commitment to human flourishing and a vision of the good city can therefore never simply remain at the level of doctrine or abstract principles - it finds its expression in a myriad of locally based, grassroots activity.

“Faithful Cities” produced May 2006

SUPPORT

INTRODUCTION

Supporting starts from the needs of the volunteer. Support can come from a variety of sources and in a variety of ways and not necessarily from supervisors.

Projects should take a personal interest in their volunteers (if they phone in to apologise for absence due to illness, bereavement or a new grandchild, ask how things are). Here faith inspired projects tend to have a good track record. This builds links and can prevent crises developing.

IDEAS FOR SUPPORT - GENERAL AREAS TO COVER

Those responsible for volunteers need to have clear systems stating when they are there to offer support. In addition some practical methods of support are:

- New volunteers can be buddied with established volunteers.
- Regular volunteer meetings can be held and here these could take place with/without staff/management committee present.
- Regular social events, parties when volunteers get together on their own or with staff, trustees etc.
- Offers from other staff or volunteers to help on specific issues (like working a new database or how a new piece of equipment works saves time and embarrassment).
- Using a newsletter, emails, a web-site or a notice board as a support method and mention when something major has happened to a volunteer (a new baby, completed NVQS, etc.).
- Get volunteers to develop group support amongst themselves (telephone contact between admin. workers, meetings of all the Counsellors on Wednesdays, or an email contact group).
- Certain types of volunteers may wish to get together to reflect on your project perhaps all the black volunteers, or all those under 25 and this can be a useful way of improving practice and making our equal opportunities claims really work.
- Access to external sources of support like counsellors may be required for volunteers undertaking certain types of delicate or traumatic work.
- If there are similar projects nearby then joint events with them could be planned relating to many of the above.

IDEAS FOR SUPPORT AND THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSION

Where volunteers who are not members of your faith community express interest in religion then invite them to a major act of worship or religious event and arrange for a member of the congregation to buddy them so they are not embarrassed.

Interest should be expressed at times of joy (like weddings and births) and at times of sadness (like death or serious illness), as this shows that your faith community really cares.

A special act of worship or religious event once a year could be arranged to celebrate the work of the project and its team of staff and volunteers.

Try to ensure that volunteers who are members of your faith community do not try to push religion down the throats of other volunteers as this can be seen as negative not supportive!

Where your volunteers are not members of your faith community you need to ensure that cliques do not develop among your members or even that a hierarchy of access to information and decision making does not become apparent.

Often people of faith are happy to support the projects of other religious traditions but remember to be aware to their special dietary or worship requirements and that they need time off from their volunteering for their own religious festivals.

Clear guidelines need to exist between members/leaders/trustees/activities of the host faith community so that volunteers do not feel unwanted or intruders - this is particularly an issue when a project is based in or next to the worship centre.

A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE

Acts of benevolence are greater than giving charity

Succah 49b

SUPERVISION OF YOUR VOLUNTEERS

INTRODUCTION

Supervising starts from the needs of the project and is about managing volunteers.

SUPERVISING - THE LEVEL REQUIRED

The level of supervision required may vary and will depend on:

- how often you see the volunteer personally
- how often you are in contact with them by telephone
- how long they have been with you (you may see new volunteers frequently or have a probationary period when you see them at defined stages)
- what type of work they do
- where they do the work (e.g. for volunteers who might be based at home and involved in IT work)
- the type of case/activity (e.g. to counsel certain clients requires more supervision)
- how volunteers feel about the agency, colleagues or the role which needs extra supervision
- the methods you use to supervise your staff undertaking similar roles
- when changes take place in the project, the volunteer's life or when the supervisor changes

CONTACT WITH THE OFFICE, STAFF & MEMBERS OF THE FAITH COMMUNITY

A designated member of staff/or of the management committee should supervise volunteers but everyone involved should offer support when the need arises.

It is vital to sensitize frontline staff responsible for reception, petty cash, etc. to the role volunteers' play - normally administrative and reception staff are your ambassadors and may need training.

Someone needs to be a reserve contact for volunteers when the normal contact is away.

It is important that members of the faith community understand (and appreciate) the role of volunteers particularly where a project is based in a worship centre or buildings adjacent to it.

CHECKLIST OF POINTS TO RAISE IN SUPERVISION

Always put the volunteer at their ease and select the venue carefully. Some issues emerge in volunteers' support sessions or trustees meetings but better to have it all out in the open then festering.

You do not want to be like a barrack room lawyer but you need to have manuals, job descriptions, etc. as you (both) may need to consult them.

Here is a proposed checklist - it may seem bureaucratic but it is a base for consistency:

- Does the volunteer have issues that they wish to raise with the supervisor?
- How are relations with staff, volunteers, clients and management committee members?
- Are the communications systems within the project adequate?
- Are there practical problems emerging (e.g. expenses, health and safety, etc.)?
- Are there any policy issues over which the volunteer or supervisor has concerns?
- Would the volunteer benefit from any training to develop, refresh or enrich them?
- Are there comments on the way the agency operates (here misunderstandings about the religious ethos might be covered when required)?
- Are there issues relating to the host faith community (often members of the faith community who are not directly involved in the project may involve themselves inappropriately)?
- Does the volunteer have any personal matters to raise?

APPENDIX I - TRAINING AND PUBLICATIONS ON VOLUNTEERING

TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

In all the boroughs of Greater Merseyside and adjacent areas you can get information on training for volunteer management from your Volunteer Centre or Council for Voluntary Service/Voluntary Action.

It may be that your local Volunteer Centre has written material or arranges training courses.

Check whether your faith community at regional or national level may be able to offer training or support.

Volunteering England's website has an information and good practice section to use: <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/managingvolunteers/goodpracticebank/> and <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/managingvolunteers/>

PUBLICATIONS ON VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Volunteering England will send you an updated list and you can also browse the online catalogue on www.volunteeringengland.org.uk by clicking on Managing Volunteers link and then publications on the left hand side. Their address is: Regent's Wharf, 8 All Saints St London, N1 9RL, www.volunteering.org.uk

Their publications are post free in the UK. We suggest the following:

- *Essential Volunteer Management* by Steve McCurley and Rick Lynch. An American Publication revised and adapted for UK use by the Directory of Social Change. (Available from Volunteering England) Cost: £14.95.
- *Managing Volunteers*, by Mark Rankin. Cost: £20. A detailed book with useful exercises. Ideal for the staff concerned to get their teeth into.
- *Working with Volunteers Series (4 titles - Personnel Issues, Recruitment & Selection, Training, and Support)*. Charts, check-lists, practical ideas on reviewing procedures - very useful. Cost: £4.50 each.
- *Volunteers in the Driving Seat & Protecting Volunteers*. Cost: £2 each. Useful check-lists for projects on driving and insurance.
- *Recruiting Volunteers* (F Dyer & U Jost), Cost: £14.95. Includes practical advice and creative ideas to help you recruit the people with the skills that you need.
- *The Good Practice Guide* (Spiral bound). Packed with information and advice about all aspects of working with volunteers.

APPENDIX II USEFUL ADDRESSES - IN AND AROUND MERSEYSIDE

HALTON

Volunteer Centre Halton & Halton Voluntary Action
Sefton House, Public Hall Street
Runcorn WA7 1NG
Tel.: 01928 592 405
Email: haltonva@haltonva.org.uk
Website: www.haltonva.org.uk

KNOWSLEY

Knowsley Council for Voluntary Service
Nugrove Villa
1 Griffiths Road
Huyton L36 6NA
Tel: 0151 489 1222
Fax: 0151 443 0251
Email: kcv@knowsleycvs.org.uk

LIVERPOOL

Church and Society
Church House
1 Hanover Street
Liverpool L1 3DW
Tel: 0151 705 2130
Fax: 0151 705 2215
Email:
churchandsociety@liverpool.anglican.org

Volunteer Centre Liverpool
7th Floor, Gostins Building
32-36 Hanover Street
Liverpool L1 4LN
Tel.: 0151 707 1113
Email:
enquiries@volunteercentreliverpool.org.uk
Website: www.volunteercentreliverpool.org.uk

Liverpool Charity & Voluntary Services (LCVS)
14 Castle Street,
Liverpool, L2 0NJ
Tel: 0151 236 7728
Email: info@lcvs.org.uk
Website: www.lcvs.org.uk

SEFTON

Volunteer Centre Sefton & Sefton CVS
3rd Floor,
Merseyside 3tc Centre
16 Crosby Road North
Waterloo, Merseyside L22 0NY
Email: info@volunteeringsefton.org.uk
Tel.: 0151 920 0726
Website: www.volunteeringsefton.org.uk

ST HELENS

Volunteer Centre St Helens & St Helens District
CVS
4th Floor Tontine House
24 Church Street
St Helens. WA10 1BD
Tel.: 01744 751 759
Email: sthelensvb@care4free.net
Website: www.sthelenscvs.org.uk

WIRRAL

Volunteer Centre Wirral & Wirral CVS
46 Hamilton Square
Birkenhead
Wirral, CH41 5AR
Tel.: 0151 647 5432
Email: wirralcvs@vda2.freeserve.co.uk
Website: www.wirralcvs.org.uk

WARRINGTON

Warrington CVS
The Gateway
89 Sankey Street
Warrington, WA1 1SR
Tel: 01925 246880
Email: warringtoncvs@thegateway.org.uk

Volunteer Centre Warrington
9 Suez Street
Warrington WA1 1EF
Tel.: 01925 637 609
Email: info@warringtonvc.org.uk
Website: www.warringtonvc.org.uk

WEST LANCASHIRE

Volunteer Centre West Lancs & W Lancs CVS 79
Westgate
Sandy Lane Centre
Skelmersdale WN8 8LA
Tel: 01695 733737
Fax: 01695 558073

WIGAN

Wigan and Leigh CVS
93 Church St
Leigh WN7 1AZ
Tel: 01942 514234
Fax: 01942 514352
Email: info@wigancvs.co.uk

This report was produced by Church and Society in the Diocese of Liverpool and we would appreciate comments, corrections and ideas!

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Accessible on the Diocese of Liverpool website: www.liverpool.anglican.org and the ChangeUp website: www.changeupmerseyside.org.uk