

# WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH VOLUNTEERS



## WHAT ARE YOU ASKING THEM TO DO? - CLARIFYING THE TASK

The following pages are the handout from the Working with Volunteers workshop.

In the handout you will find:

- A 2 page document which gives guidance on clarifying volunteer roles.
  - This document is a **draft** and is the first of a series of guidance sheets on working with volunteers that we are currently developing. We would welcome feedback.
  - Because the document is designed as an online resource, it will have links to other documents. Where links are referred to, please just scroll down to the relevant template later on in the documents
- 3 template documents - if you would like non-pdf versions of these, please contact Julia Hill ([julia.hill@cuf.org.uk](mailto:julia.hill@cuf.org.uk))
  - Sample Volunteer Role checklist
  - Sample Volunteer Role card
  - Sample Volunteer Role Description

If you would like more information about this handout, please contact Julia Hill :  
[julia.hill@cuf.org.uk](mailto:julia.hill@cuf.org.uk) or 07825 854951)

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November 2013

# WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH VOLUNTEERS



## WHAT ARE YOU ASKING THEM TO DO? – CLARIFYING THE TASK

In a church context, everything we do is an outward sign of our Christian faith and values: how we do a task matters as much as getting the job done. The person who serves drinks in a way that makes people feel valued is not only offering refreshment but is also sharing God's love for the world. The converse is also true!

If a task matters enough for someone to give up their time to do it then it matters enough to make sure that the person doing it actually knows what they're meant to be doing and why. It also matters that they feel that they are valued for their contribution.

### Language note:

For the sake of simplicity we refer to people doing tasks as volunteers – simply because they are not being paid for what they do. In practice, they may never refer to themselves as volunteers and may prefer you not to either but choosing a widely accepted, single alternative word is quite challenging. You will, of course, choose language that fits your context.

## THE PRINCIPLES

Before asking someone to take on a task, it's worth thinking about four basic questions.

- What is the task?
- Why does the task matter?
- Who will be a reference point and provide guidance for the volunteer?
- Are there things that need to be in place to enable the task to be done safely?

### CASE STUDY: WE NEED SOMEONE NEW FOR THE 'COFFEE' ROTA

Someone is going to join the rota for serving hot drinks at a weekly drop in session or after a service.

#### What is the task?

- to serve hot drinks to people

#### Why does the task matter?

- because serving people in this way
  - gives them a hot drink that they otherwise wouldn't have
  - makes people feel welcome and valued
  - is part of creating an atmosphere where people can relax and talk to each other.

#### Who is going to provide support and guidance?

- Either the person responsible for the rota or another specific person. They will
  - give practical guidance on where everything is for making drinks
  - explain any systems used and answer questions
  - explain exactly what they do, and don't, have to do *e.g. do they have to set up, wash up, bring the milk etc or does someone else do that?*
  - provide ongoing support, including thanking the person and sorting out any problems

#### What needs to be in place to enable the task to be done safely?

Someone needs to take responsibility for ensuring that the task can be done safely

- Is the equipment safe – has electrical equipment been checked and does the person know how to use it correctly?
- Are there hygiene guidelines to follow?
- Is there insurance to cover any accidents that might happen?
- Are there any safeguarding issues to consider?

## THE PRACTICE

Every time that someone is asked to do something, those four basic questions should be asked and answered but how formally that is done will depend on the context. It's important not to put unnecessary barriers in the way of a simple act of service.

Below are a few suggestions of different ways to ensure that it's clear what someone is being asked to do in a way that helps them to do it well. The suggestions range from behind the scenes to fairly formal and structured and they are just ideas to get you started: you may well have other ideas of what could be helpful where you are.

### 1 Checklists

You can use a simple list to ensure that you are clear what is being asked of the volunteer, in order to then communicate important information to the volunteer as informally or formally as appropriate.

Depending on your situation, the checklist could be the responsibility of an administrator, churchwarden or clergy person, or of the person responsible for a group of volunteers

Follow this [link](#) for sample checklist

### 2 Welcome Card

When someone takes on a role like a Godparent, they are sometimes given a card welcoming them to their responsibilities. A welcome card, also containing some key information, could be given to new volunteers when they take on a role. This could either be given informally or it could be given as part of a service or other occasion when that person's new ministry is prayed for.

Follow [link](#) for sample card

### 3 Role Description

This is the most formal option but can still be kept quite simple and is very useful. It represents standard good practice when working with volunteers. Like a job description, it tells someone what they taking on, who they report to and what the role involves. Some role descriptions go into more detail, like how often someone is volunteering and on what days but this is not essential. Please remember that although it is similar to a job description, it is important not to stray into the vocabulary of 'job' and 'work' as this blurs the legal boundaries between working and volunteering and can cause problems.

Follow [link](#) for sample role description

## FURTHER INFORMATION:

- Faithfully Volunteering - A good practice guide about volunteering for churches, Christian projects, and other voluntary groups is available online ([www.cuf.org.uk](http://www.cuf.org.uk))
- NCVO hosts a wide range of information sheets on its website. Go to the Practical Support section, pick the Volunteering option from the menu on the left and scroll down to the Good Practice Bank. Some of their useful information sheets are free to download.
- It's worth checking out your local volunteer centre. Many are excellent sources of advice and support.

## Checklist for when a new volunteer starts

Not all of the issues listed below will be relevant to all tasks, but the list will serve as a checklist for those who look after volunteers or people on a rota, to make sure that nothing gets overlooked.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>What is the task?</b>  | <i>e.g. serving drinks, welcoming people, admin etc</i>  |
| <b>Why does the task matter?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• i.e. how will it serve God and/or people?</li> </ul>  | <i>e.g. Welcoming everyone is a sign that all people are valued equally by God, as well as a practical opportunity to explain the set up to newcomers.</i> |
| <b>Who will take responsibility for supporting the volunteer?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To deal with any organisation and administration e.g. rotas!</li> <li>• To show the volunteer the ropes initially, including answering any questions they may have</li> <li>• to thank them for what they are doing</li> <li>• to help them understand the purpose of the task and to continue to see its importance</li> <li>• Who will be the main contact if there are any suggestions or problems</li> </ul> | <i>This may be one person or several.</i>  |
| <b>Equipment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• will any equipment be used for this task?</li> <li>• Is any relevant equipment safe for use?</li> <li>• Who will check that the volunteer knows how to use the equipment?</li> </ul>  | <i>e.g. kettle, crockery, urn, oven, computer, projector, ladder</i>   |
| <b>Administration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who will check that the PCC insurance covers the volunteer for that role?</li> <li>• Is a DBS check needed? <i>[Many roles don't require a DBS check but you need to be sure either way]</i></li> <li>• How will a DBS check be organised, if needed</li> </ul>  |  |

**St James Church  
Serving God and Our Community**



If you are unable to speak to Sharon, please get in touch with David Someone2  
another.contact@somewhereelse.com or 01987 654321

Sharon Someone coordinates the Welcome Team  
Please ask her if you have any questions or suggestions  
sharon.someone@churchwebsite.co.uk  
01234 567891

St James Church  
Church Lane  
Anytown  
English County  
Postcode

Welcome to the  
St James' Church  
Welcome Team

*An electronic version of this new role card is available  
from Julia Hill at Church Urban Fund:  
julia.hill@cutf.org.uk*

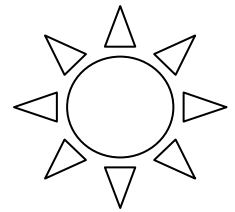
The Welcome Team greets people  
who visit our Drop-in Centre.

Thank you for taking on this important role, which helps  
us to ensure that every visitor to the centre feels  
welcome and valued in the way that God values all of us.  
We hope that you enjoy this role and that it will help you  
grow and flourish.

*'Remember to offer to show hospitality. There are some  
who by doing so have entertained angels unaware.'  
Hebrews 13:2*

# St Somewhere Drop-in Centre

## Volunteer Role Description



Name of Role: Hospitality Volunteer

Purpose of Role: To help make the drop-in centre a welcoming and safe place for everyone who visits

Reporting to: Drop in Manager (Named Person)

### Tasks:

- Meeting and greeting people to make them welcome
- Chatting to people and helping everyone to feel at ease
- Looking out for visitors who are on their own and seeing if they want someone to talk to or if they're happy alone
- Making tea and coffee for visitors when particularly busy
- Following all the policies and procedures of the Drop-in Centre so that everyone is safe

Volunteers will be asked to do some or all of these tasks as agreed with the Centre Managers.

If there are any other things that you would like to do to help, please have a word with one of the managers.

*'Remember to show hospitality. There are some who, by so doing have entertained angels without knowing it.'*

*Hebrews 13:2*

*An electronic version of this role description is available from Julia Hill at Church Urban Fund:  
[julia.hill@cuf.org.uk](mailto:julia.hill@cuf.org.uk)*