

# Guidance Notes for Volunteer Opportunity Details Form

## Introduction

When completing the form it's worth remembering that you need to "sell" your organisation to prospective volunteers, so keep your content interesting, easy to understand and to the point. It may take around fifteen – twenty minutes to complete the form, but it could attract people who will give hundreds of hours to your organisation so it could be time well spent.

Before recruiting volunteers, your organisation needs to have a clear understanding of what tasks they are to do. Organisations that can offer interesting and productive tasks will find it easier to attract and keep volunteers. Different people will, of course, find different tasks interesting but the design of the volunteer opportunity is important.

You can get further information and advice on designing volunteer opportunities and best practice on volunteer involvement in our tips and advice section on [www.volunteerglasgow.org](http://www.volunteerglasgow.org) or from Volunteering Team staff by phoning 0141 226 3431.

## What we can offer

Each year more than 2000 people individually contact the Volunteer Centre for information about volunteering and community action opportunities in Glasgow. Many more people use our website to search for opportunities. But there are also 100's of organisations looking for volunteers. To ensure prospective volunteers are able to consider **your** organisation's volunteering opportunities, you need to give us the information they need. We cannot guarantee, however, that prospective volunteers will choose to pursue your opportunities.

**IF** the work of the volunteers in your opportunity benefits Glasgow local authority area residents, **AND** we have no queries/concerns, we will advertise your opportunities **free** of charge in whichever of the following ways suits you best:

1. **Advertise your opportunities on our website with your own contact details** – people will be able to contact you direct and the Volunteer Centre will not have vetted them in any way. Our staff may also refer people to you after an informal interview. Your details will be available to all the prospective volunteers using the Volunteer Centre. If you have all the necessary procedures in place to work with enquiries from prospective volunteers, this option should suit you.
2. **Don't advertise your opportunities on our website at all** - your opportunities will only be offered to someone if they choose to make an appointment to meet with a volunteer organiser to find out about specific opportunities and only if the organiser makes an initial assessment that the person *may* be suitable. It is likely you will miss out on the vast majority of people that contact us if you don't allow us to advertise your opportunities on the internet.
3. **Advertise your opportunities on our website with the Volunteer Centre's contact details** – people will be asked to supply their name and contact details and we will pass these onto you for you to take the next steps. **Only choose this option if** you don't already seek volunteers from elsewhere or if your organisation contact information is also someone's personal/home contact details. In some limited circumstances we will interview volunteers should this be more appropriate for you. Please contact us for further information.

## Completing the Opportunity Details Form – guidance for individual questions

If it hasn't already done so, your organisation needs to complete an "organisation registration form" before giving us any information on volunteer opportunities.

### Question 2

First of all, you need a title to describe the opportunity. There's no need to have "volunteer" in the title – simply say befriender, driver, adviser, web designer, treasurer etc. If you have more than one opportunity, please photocopy the form or ask us for copies and complete a separate form for each opportunity. This will ensure that each one is advertised to the maximum number of people.

### Question 3

Next, think about why your organisation needs a particular person to volunteer. Focus on the need to be met – focus on the intended result. Sum this up in no more than 660 characters (approx 35 words).

For example avoid – Receptionist wanted to answer phones, take messages and room bookings. An alternative approach would be "People coming to the Mental Health Centre are often embarrassed, confused and uneasy. We need a receptionist to welcome people and make them feel as comfortable as possible".

Other examples are:-

- Adult Literacy Tutor** - Many people from all walks of life are unable to take advantage of the full benefits of our society because they are unable to read or write. Would you like to help change this?
- Girl Guide Leader** - Many girls grow up without the self-confidence and other skills to become competent, successful adults. Guide Leaders can help change this – could you be one?
- Clothes Sorter** - Help to raise money to combat disease and poverty in underdeveloped countries by sorting out donated clothes for our charity shop.
- Driver** - Some senior citizens live with little or no contact with other people. We need you to pick them up in a minibus and bring them to our Centre for companionship, care and attention.
- Teller/Cashier** - People on low incomes often fall into very high interest loans or worse still loan sharks. Our Credit Union gives them an alternative and we need tellers/cashiers to staff our office.

### Question 3

Next think about a longer message about the opportunity – the potential benefits for the volunteer – and the potential benefits to the end user be it a person or the environment.

You don't need to include information about training or support, as these topics are dealt with further on.

Example -

*"Positive Steps is accepting applications from people to join a team of Literacy Tutors who enable adults, free of charge, to improve their reading and writing."*

*Tutors can make a significant difference to peoples' reading/writing skills levels and past Tutors say it has helped them meet new people, make new friends, feel part of a group. They also report a high feel good factor when adults make good progress.*

*Past adult learners have said the following "It's great – I can now help my kids with their homework" and "I've got the bug for learning and I hope to go to college soon" and "At last I don't need to pretend that I can read the newspaper!"*

*Tutors work with individuals or small groups of up to three and take them through a structured learning programme."*

Some examples of what motivates people to volunteer are given below. You might want to use some of them in your answer. Quotes from existing volunteers and users can be very powerful as well.

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| * try out a new career   | * learn a new skill/rebuild an old one |
| * to feel useful         | * improve community life               |
| * do something different | * to enjoy spare time                  |

### **Question 9**

An example would be "Tutoring takes place in the Positive Steps Centre, 26 High St, Anytown. It is close to the train and bus stations. Bus nos. 10 and 16."

### **Question 10**

Tick one box only. For example an Adult Literary Tutor opportunity would tick the "Tutoring/Support Learners" box. A Girl Guide Leader opportunity would tick "Youth Work".

This is how your opportunity will be categorised on the Volunteer Centres website.

### **Question 11**

Again select one box only. An Adult Literacy Tutor opportunity would tick the "Education/Literacy" box.

This will also be used to categorise your opportunity on the Volunteer Centres website.

### **Question 12**

Young volunteers especially value schemes that provide certificated recognition for the work they have undertaken. The MV Awards give you a straightforward mechanism for you to offer this. Endorsed by Scottish Government Ministers, certificates are issued through the Volunteer Centre for 50/100/200 hours service. All you need to do is verify a volunteer has achieved these hours.

### **Question 14**

If there are specific restrictions please say why. Care needs to be taken that people are not being discriminated against inappropriately/unfairly because of their age or gender.

### **Question 15**

We realise it is difficult to give a precise answer to this question, but it would be useful for us to have a rough idea on how many volunteers you feel you need for the particular volunteer opportunity.

### **Question 16**

For example "The ability to read and write are essential tutor skills. Adults learn more when tutors are supportive, offer encouragement and are focused on the task."

### **Question 17**

If you do not want the volunteer opportunity to appear on our website, please tick the box, but 1000's of prospective volunteers using our online database won't have any chance of seeing it. Please refer to the section "What we can offer" above for more details or contact a member of the Volunteering Team for further advice.

### **Question 23**

#### **TASTERS:**

Taster sessions enable potential volunteers and volunteer involving organisations to 'try each other out' and get a 'flavour' of what its all about before either party commits to a longer term volunteering agreement.

If organisations tick the box to say they can offer tasters in a volunteering opportunity then they need to be clear that people can come along and try out that same opportunity and the activities it would normally involve for a couple of hours or more in a day.

The benefits of taster sessions for the potential volunteer are many. The person has an opportunity to see where they would be volunteering, who they would be volunteering with, and try out the tasks they will be required to do. This helps to alleviate any anxiety or pressure some individuals may experience due to their personal circumstances.

For organisations, taster sessions offer the opportunity to find out if a person has a positive contribution to make to your organization. Taster sessions do not bypass the need for any appropriate volunteer selection procedures, but they do provide an insight of what the volunteer can offer in terms of ability and aptitude. For group tasters, it offers the organisation the chance of getting a bit of extra work undertaken regardless of whether any of the individuals decide its something they want to do again. Care, however, should still be taken to ensure you fulfil your health and safety responsibilities for taster volunteers.

A taster session takes place **before** any standard **selection or vetting procedures** take place, and may involve more than one potential volunteer coming along to try it out together or as part of an established group. You will however, still have to adhere to any basic health & safety procedures and insurance clauses for example that you have an obligation to meet. (For example, a large national voluntary organisation in the past that recruited volunteers required them to complete membership applications to ensure they were covered by the correct insurance). Other considerations are the physical and intellectual capabilities of potential volunteers. It is essential that their general health and well being is assessed as fit to undertake a taster session before any tasks are undertaken. This area of concern can be discussed with key/support workers who have made the referral or with the potential volunteer themselves.

Tasters will almost certainly be **inappropriate** where the volunteer would normally be working with children or vulnerable adults. Any volunteers will almost certainly be required to complete a thorough selection and vetting procedure including interviews, references and criminal record disclosures before having any contact with vulnerable service users. Where this is the case, organisations cannot offer tasters but may wish to adopt **other ways** to provide interested volunteers with more information: for example,

- Through video material, and/or
- Initial information sessions where existing volunteers can talk in more detail about what's involved.

### **Question 25**

For example "All people need to participate in our Tutor Start Up programme. Run over four weeks (4 x 2 hour sessions), it covers topics including how adults learn best; motivational skills; helpful tips plus input from existing tutors and adult learners. Once tutoring you will be

paired with an existing tutor until you feel confident enough to 'go it alone'. This tutor "buddying" will also help you to identify any areas where you need to further develop your skills." For example "Positive Steps repays tutor travel expenses, public transport or car (current mileage rate = 30p), every week."

### **Question 33**

#### **FAMILY VOLUNTEERING:**

With Scotland's declining and ageing population it is becoming increasingly necessary to find more flexible ways of involving more volunteers. Do you already – or could you - make it easier for families with children to volunteer with your existing opportunities?

There are benefits for the family. You're likely to attract volunteers that couldn't find the time otherwise. You help to create a new generation of dedicated volunteers.

You will need to check out all your practice to verify it's "Family Friendly" and if you require additional information or advice, don't hesitate to get in contact with us.

#### **Declaration**

Please read the following before signing the form:

#### **Volunteer Centre Network Scotland**

*Volunteer Centres in Scotland exist to involve more people more effectively in volunteering to help make Scotland a better place to live*

#### **Our Vision**

Our vision is of a Scotland where anyone who wants to volunteer can do so readily, a Scotland where volunteering is universally valued and recognised and where the overwhelming majority of people do volunteer.

We support the Universal Declaration on Volunteering adopted by the International Association for Volunteer Effort in January 2001. This identifies volunteering as a fundamental building block of civil society and challenges volunteers and leaders of all sectors throughout the world to unite as partners to promote and support effective volunteering, accessible to all, as a symbol of solidarity among all peoples and nations.

Volunteer Centres support volunteering that builds healthy, sustainable communities that respect the dignity of all people; helps tackle social, cultural, economic and environmental issues, and builds a more humane and just society.

Our definition of volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of the community, undertaken by choice and without financial gain

#### **Our Values**

- We value **Inclusiveness**. Everyone has the right to volunteer and should be free to do so.
- We value **Diversity**. Everyone in society, regardless of race, sex, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, social background, formal qualifications or perceived success, has some passion, skill or talent that can make a difference to someone else's life as well as his or her own.
- We value **Freewill and Choice**. Volunteering is an act of free choice. People choose to act in response to their own personal value and belief systems and there must be no form of compulsion or coercion. It follows that just as a person may decide to give time, he must also be able to refuse to do so.
- We value **Reciprocity**. Volunteering to help others is a two-way process. It is a shared experience in which helpers and those helped all benefit. People get more out than they put in. They offer their time, energy, skills and services without remuneration, but should benefit in other ways, such as the satisfaction of

responding to needs, the acquisition of new skills and experience, making social contacts and personal enjoyment and fun.

- We value **Empowerment**. Volunteering empowers people to fulfil their potential and acquire new skills and knowledge, building their capacity and creativity to contribute to the health and vibrancy of their own communities.
- We value **Impact**. We believe that volunteering is a powerful driver of change – social, economic, cultural and environmental.
- We value **Enabling**. We are committed to motivating, inspiring and then enabling diverse groups of people to access volunteering opportunities.
- We value **Partnership**. We are committed to working in partnership with others in motivating people to volunteer.