



Volunteer Induction

Induction Process

The support you should have in place when a volunteer first starts in a new role is called Induction. This is a system of providing a new volunteer with the essential information and training they need to perform their role effectively.

The induction process should make the volunteer feel welcome and provide them with the practical information that they need in order to successfully carry out their role. Things to cover in an induction are:

- **Introductions** – Introduce them to other staff and volunteers
- **Facilities** – Show them around the building and the place they'll be working (kitchen facilities, fire exits) and show them how to use any equipment they will be using as part of their volunteering
- **Support** – Provide a named person for questions/problems – support structure that's available to them within the organisation.
- **Details of the role itself** – This should include a role description detailing main tasks and responsibilities of the role, details of any training, etc. Information on how this project fits in with others. This should include information about the client group who the volunteer may be working with.
- **Personal information** – How expenses are paid, where to eat, where the toilets are, how to lock up the office, who else shares the office space, where to park, etc.
- **Any other important policies/procedures** volunteers may need to know about (e.g. complaints procedure, health and safety, equal opportunities policy).
- **Organisational Information** – including its aims and objectives – the organisations Mission Statement, values and details of the services offered.

Try not to overwhelm the volunteer with information on their first session. You might find it useful to develop a 'Volunteer Handbook' which the volunteer can refer to and that you can work through together as part of their induction. Induction could include:

- **Taster Sessions** – Volunteers can be given the opportunity to try out a variety of activities to see what best suits their skills and experience
- **Work shadowing** – Working alongside someone already in the job

- **Hand-over** – A period during which the person the volunteer is taking over from shows them the job for a short period of time before they leave
- **Buddy system** – A specific person who provides one-to-one support for new volunteers
- **Training** – Specific training a volunteer may need to undertake before they can take on their volunteering role
- **Sample Documents** – See Volunteer Induction checklist on <http://www.northumberlandcva.org.uk>

Training

Volunteers should be provided with all the training they need to carry out their role. If the task is quite demanding or specialised then there will be a need to have some specific training sessions before the volunteers can get fully into their role. Having a role description will help in identifying training needs. A training programme can be produced to develop the skills and qualities that are needed to carry out the role.

On the job training	A member of staff, or another volunteer, will show the volunteer how to do a task and then supervise them as they do it. This method is effective as long as the person doing the training takes care to make sure the new volunteer really understands what they are meant to be doing, and the volunteer feels able to ask questions without feeling stupid. Written notes for the volunteer to refer to would be useful.
External trainers	Send volunteers on a training course with a trainer from outside the organisation. This can work either with groups or individual volunteers, as you can either send one or two people on a public open course, or book the trainer to do the course purely for your organisation. Local further education colleges or adult education centres and the Volunteer Centre may offer suitable training opportunities. Ask around, make use of local networks and forums to find out what other organisations are doing. You might find that someone else is keen to run something similar, and running something jointly could be more cost effective.
In-house training	This works best if you can take on volunteers in groups and you need to train them in fairly complex tasks or ideas. Organisations whose volunteers give legal advice, for example, usually have to devise a fairly rigorous in-house training programme that volunteers need to complete before being able to work with members of the public. Similarly, where volunteers are working with vulnerable people there will be a need for some fairly in-depth training around areas such as setting boundaries, protection of children or vulnerable adults and confidentiality.

However you decide to address your volunteers training needs, the key is to make sure that training is designed around their roles. Current volunteers can be extremely useful in helping identify the elements in which they feel some formal training would be useful, and they will be able to feed in examples of situations that could form interesting case studies for discussion. Experienced volunteers might even find it interesting to deliver, or at least co-deliver, elements of a training programme for new volunteers.

Make sure you keep a record of the training given to volunteers. It is useful both to you as an organisation and to the volunteers themselves.

Sample Documents

See the Volunteer Training Record on <http://www.northumberlandcva.org.uk>.