



Northumberland CVA Volunteer Connect - Writing effective volunteer opportunity adverts

In order to attract high quality potential volunteers you need to make sure that the information you include and the way you present it is interesting, well written, informative and engaging. Your role will be one among many so you need to ensure that it stands out if you are to get the volunteers you need.

Before you can add volunteering opportunities to Northumberland CVA's Volunteer Connect, you will need to be registered. Please ring 01670 858688 or email volunteering@northumberlandcva.org.uk for information about how to do this.

Role Title

An opportunity on Volunteer Connect has to attract people's attention in just a few seconds. As they scan the opportunities, if they like what they see, they will click through for more information. Add some intrigue to encourage them to stop and read the description.

Use a descriptive, eye-catching title for the opportunity. Try to avoid generic titles such as 'Volunteer' or 'Admin assistant'. These are very common and your opportunity will not stand out.

Don't use capital letters – they make the words harder to read and it can appear that you are shouting at people.

Short and full opportunity descriptions

Reading from a screen is harder than reading on paper. Research shows that most users scan pages, so opportunities that are concise and logical are much more likely to be read in detail.

Keep the short opportunity description brief, snappy and straight to the point. You have a maximum of 500 characters so you will need to make the information concise yet appealing. Again you want to encourage the potential volunteer to click on the full details to find out more.

On the full description *use plain English and avoid jargon and technical words.*

Keep the sentences and paragraphs short and aim to keep the word count down. More than 15 words in a sentence reduces the clarity of the meaning.



Always check spelling and punctuation – a badly written opportunity with spelling errors can put off a volunteer as it looks as if the organisation isn't really interested. If possible get someone else to proof read it for accuracy and to see if it really 'sells' the role

Try to include information that answers the following questions:

- What does the role involve?
- Who will the person be volunteering with?
- What skills will they develop?
- What benefit will their volunteering bring to the organisation and to them personally?
- How flexible can the volunteering be?
- Are there set times that they need to be available?
- How many hours a week?
- Where does the opportunity take place?
- Is this opportunity open to volunteers under 18 years and if so what is the minimum age?

Get the potential volunteer involved – refer to the reader as 'you' and use the second person ('you', 'your' and 'yours' etc.). This encourages the person to see themselves in the role. Talk about the organisation as 'we' and 'our'.

Asking questions can also help draw potential volunteers in, feel positive about what they can contribute and get them imagining themselves in the role.

Examples of short descriptions:

Lunchtime assistant – Volunteers needed to help lay the tables, serve lunch and wash up.

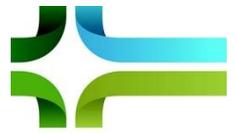
Might be better described as:

Lunchtime club helper – Make friends over lunch. Our friendly stroke club needs volunteers to help with lunchtime duties and socialise with members

Shop assistant – Homelessness charity works to give people a chance to help themselves. We run outreach, hostel and support services. We need volunteers to help in our charity shop.

Might be better described as:

Retail assistant – Are you keen to get some experience in retail? Our busy shop needs an enthusiastic assistant to help sort, select and sell. Profits go towards our



work helping homeless people to help themselves.

Opportunity Checklist

Remember, well-written informative opportunities are far more likely to attract potential volunteers.

Do

- ✓ Make it sound interesting and appealing
- ✓ Use a concise and descriptive opportunity title
- ✓ Place important information at the start of the opportunity description
- ✓ Use short paragraphs and sentences
- ✓ Keep the word count down
- ✓ Avoid jargon and acronyms
- ✓ Check spelling and punctuation
- ✓ Get someone to proof read it
- ✓ Include required hours and availability of opportunity

Don't

- ✗ Use generic opportunity titles e.g. 'admin volunteer' 'Volunteer'
- ✗ Use too many words – keep it simple
- ✗ Use uninspiring, boring descriptions for roles and ideal volunteers
- ✗ Put too much emphasis on role and not enough on the person
- ✗ Add too much technical details about the role or organisation

See also:

Northumberland CVA Volunteer Connect – Guidance for completing opportunity template

Northumberland CVA Volunteer Connect – Guidance on registering and adding or reviewing opportunities