Volunteering In the Arts

A toolkit created by Volunteer Scotland and Voluntary Arts Scotland
Case Study

Brian Innes - Brian has a keen interest in creative activities and was delighted to be a part of the pre-recorded filming in George Square for the Opening Ceremony. Since then, Brian has been volunteering his time to help co-coordinate the volunteer exhibition, ‘Our City, Our Volunteers, Our Games’, at the People’s Palace in Glasgow.

“The exhibition gave me the chance to use some of my photography skills and get creative. It’s great to have the chance to meet other people and all use our different talents and skills to bring together a piece of work.

I helped out at Celtic Connections this year making up press packs, being front of house and making up artists’ IDs.”

Brian is keen to be a part of other events and festivals, and encourages people to do the same; “Just go for it!”

“I really like dancing” - Fiona
“For the wonderful experience” - Lorna
“For the laughs” - Molly
“Glasgow’s my city and I wanted to be involved in it” - Irene
“It was on my bucket list” - Kim
“I’m Glasgow born and bred and wanted to be a part of it” - Sam
“To be a part of a great experience” - Mulhim

Glasgow 2014 Cast Members
“Why we got involved”
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Kim Tiong

“The best thing about being a Glasgow 2014 cast volunteer was getting the experience of team building and being a part of something that was so big. Also at the same time I did a lot of dancing and high energy movements which was a fantastic way to keep fit. I am a creative person and I was inspired by the costume making and dresses. It made me appreciate how much hard work goes into it and it has inspired me to search for similar events so I can help out with costume making on a big scale like this.”
Volunteering in the ARTS

BACKGROUND

Arts volunteering takes place in many different kinds of arts groups, from grassroots level to wider cultural programmes within museums, libraries and galleries. It is a vibrant and dynamic type of volunteering which can make a real difference at a local level. Arts projects offer opportunities for participants to gain increased workplace confidence, develop a wide range of transferable skills and, where training is offered, vocational skills and qualifications.

This toolkit has been produced to support small and medium-sized arts groups who struggle to improve the support they offer volunteers. The toolkit includes:

- Ideas, suggestions and recommendations
- A range of checklists for those new to working with volunteers
- A range of case studies to celebrate what is already happening across the sector
- Links to further information

It has been written by Volunteer Scotland and Voluntary Arts Scotland. Drawing on both organisations’ experience and knowledge of arts/cultural volunteering, the toolkit uses a wide range of best-practice quality assurance processes and procedures, including those that underpin Investors in Volunteers, the UK quality standard with a unique focus on volunteering. More details of iiv can be found on page 24 or on the Volunteer Scotland website.

www.volunteerscotland.org.uk

We hope that you will find this toolkit invaluable in your volunteering practice.
“It gives you a community spirit and something you can’t get anywhere else. There’s something very specific about volunteering that makes you feel good in a way I don’t think you can get from anywhere else in life.”

Glasgow 2014 Opening Ceremonies Cast Volunteer - ‘People Make Glasgow’ Section
FOREWORD

The 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games involved a record number of volunteers, and the Culture 2014 programme was also Scotland’s largest ever cultural event in terms of participation and visitor numbers.

The Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Games involved nearly 3,000 people volunteering in a cultural event before a global audience. As part of the Glasgow Games Legacy, the ‘Casting On’ project led by Voluntary Arts Scotland and Volunteer Scotland, and funded by Spirit of 2012, helped the Ceremonies’ volunteers and others continue their arts volunteering across Scotland. Casting On introduced voluntary arts groups and organisations to new participants, and helped inspire people to find, and get involved with, creative cultural activity in their local area.

The reasons people take part in the voluntary arts are many and varied, including developing a creative talent, sharing skills or to meet others. The Volunteering in the Arts Toolkit provides an overview of how voluntary arts groups might best support volunteers.

Voluntary Arts Scotland is the national strategic development agency for all self-led creative activity and is part of the UK charity, Voluntary Arts. Our support is primarily focussed on the people who set up and run voluntary arts groups for no financial gain.

Volunteer Scotland is the only national centre for volunteering. We exist to increase effective volunteer participation to improve Scotland’s economic and social wellbeing.

Together, we are committed to celebrating volunteering in the arts and ensuring clear ways to match up those who want to find new opportunities and groups that are seeking new volunteers.

In preparing this Toolkit, we are grateful to colleagues at Voluntary Arts England and Volunteering England (NCVO) for sharing their experience of compiling a similar publication.

We hope you find this Toolkit useful and that the spirit of the 2014 Glasgow Games and lives on in voluntary arts activity across Scotland.

George Thomson
CEO, Volunteer Scotland

Jemma Neville
Director, Voluntary Arts Scotland
Case Study - James Cameron

Transport manager James Cameron, from Edinburgh, was a cast member in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, taking on a performing role in the centrepiece routines. In the ten weeks prior to the Games, he committed three hours of his time four nights a week to attend rehearsals. Although he had already been volunteering at his local Scouts club for seven years, James’ involvement in the Games was his first experience of arts volunteering.

“Despite having had a keen interest in drama and other performing arts all my life, it was an avenue I’d never actually explored before. Being part of the Games was an incredible experience and really helped open my eyes up to what I’m capable of. Volunteering in the arts is a great way for people to experience team work, and this was on a massive scale when it came to the Opening and Closing Ceremonies - there were 3500 individual volunteers, and we were all relying on each other to make the performance come together.”

Since the Games, James has continued to look for new volunteering opportunities and has signed up for a Volunteer Scotland ‘My Volunteer Account’, so that he can be matched to suitable roles. He also meets with fellow cast members regularly as new friendships have been firmly struck.
What is arts volunteering?

When we talk about ‘arts volunteering’, we mean either of the following:

- Volunteering of any kind within an arts group
- Taking on an artistic/creative role within a non-arts group/organisation

The ways in which a volunteer could help an arts group are many and varied, but generally involve ‘behind the scenes’ and supporting / governance roles, rather than participation.

For example, volunteers could:

- Help an amateur drama company with their box office or publicity.
- Join the committee of a choir.
- Take on the social media upkeep of a festival.
- Drive members of an orchestra to their concerts.

Plus much more besides.

To capture the energy and enthusiasm generated by the 2014 Commonwealth Games Opening and Closing Ceremonies, Voluntary Arts Scotland produced a short film to inspire others to take up arts volunteering.

You can view this short film, and other arts volunteering information and case studies at [www.voluntaryarts.org/volunteering-in-the-arts](http://www.voluntaryarts.org/volunteering-in-the-arts). There, you will also find our filmed interview with the Scottish Community Drama Association, talking about their very positive experience of recruiting a social media volunteer.

**Time commitment**

Arts volunteering comes in many shapes and sizes. Hundreds of festivals take place across Scotland each year, providing volunteers with short, one-off - but very rewarding and fun - experiences.

Or volunteers could take on a more long-term commitment, such as joining a committee, helping to run regular workshops or taking somebody to the theatre through a befriending service.

Arts volunteering positions are the second most popular search on the Volunteer Scotland website – so we know the demand is there. Many arts groups need extra help but don’t always realise they can ask for it through volunteer centres – you can!

The next sections talk you through how to plan for and recruit a volunteer.
Introduction

Who is a volunteer?

The definition of volunteering currently used by the Scottish Government is:

Volunteering is the giving of time and energy through a third party, which can bring measurable benefits to the volunteer, individual beneficiaries, groups and organisations, communities, environment and society at large. It is a choice undertaken of one’s own free will, and is not motivated primarily for financial gain or for a wage or salary.

‘Volunteer’ may therefore refer to a wide range of people taking part in a wide variety of activities. Whatever they do, anyone who donates their time freely to an organisation in order to benefit others is a volunteer.

Member or volunteer?

Some cultural organisations may understand ‘volunteer recruitment’ as ‘finding more members, audience members or participants’. However, there is a difference:

- **Member**: someone who belongs to a group, club or organisation.
- **Audience member**: someone who benefits from the artistic output of an organisation.
- **Participant**: someone who takes part in the activities of an organisation.
- **Volunteer**: someone who freely offers to do something for an individual, group, club or organisation.

This distinction might be less clear in the cultural sector than in others as our members, audience members and participants are often the people who do things for or with us. You need to be clear that a volunteer is someone who freely offers to do something that benefits someone other than themselves or their family members – whatever other roles they fill alongside this.

Why do people volunteer?

To effectively manage and support volunteers, it’s important to understand the motivations behind why people volunteer. This will help you attract, support, motivate and keep volunteers in the right roles for your group, club or organisation.

People volunteer for a variety of reasons, from wanting to give something back to their community to wanting to learn new skills, from wanting to do something fun in their free time to wanting to make new friends. To find out more about current trends in volunteering across Scotland, including a breakdown for your local authority area, please see the Volunteer Scotland website.

It’s important that you get to know an individual’s motivations when they start volunteering and also recognise that someone’s motivation to volunteer will change over time.

Planning for volunteering

There are lots of reasons for recruiting volunteers, for example you might:

- Be looking for new energy, ideas and approaches.
- Want to make your organisation more attractive to funders.
- Need more people to undertake operational roles such as fundraising.
- Want to offer more activities or meet a new need.

Before you recruit volunteers, think about how volunteers can best contribute to your organisation, what roles they can take on and what support they’ll need. Think about how volunteering can help you work towards your overall aims and objectives, and how you can engage people in new ways to work towards your goals.
Planning for volunteering also includes thinking about the budget you have available to support volunteers as well as identifying any other resources or equipment needed and agreeing who within the organisation will be responsible for which aspects of volunteer management.

**Volunteer policy**

One of the first things you’ll need to put in place is a volunteer policy. This should include a statement about why your organisation involves volunteers as well as information about how volunteers will be supported and what your mutual expectations are for volunteering - what you expect and what can they expect in return?

For more information, see the Volunteer Scotland good practice guides about developing a volunteer policy and developing a volunteer agreement.²

**What do you want volunteers to do?**

Volunteers are recruited specifically to do something. Therefore, the first question you need to ask is what you are recruiting them to do.

Think practically about tasks that staff members currently don’t have time to do or about what support they might need to add value to their work.

Think adventurously about dream projects which your organisation doesn’t have the resources for.

Think realistically about what an individual volunteer or group of volunteers could achieve and what training and support you will need to provide.

Think sympathetically about what might interest a potential volunteer and benefit their own development.

Once you know what you want volunteers to do, you can start to write role descriptions. These lay out the specific activities a volunteer will undertake. They are like staff job descriptions, but use more relaxed terminology - hence ‘role description’, rather than ‘job description’ - to avoid implying a contract of employment.

The Voluntary Arts Scotland Briefing, ‘Micro-volunteering’ could prove useful for those planning to use short-term volunteers. Download for free from the ‘Resources’ section at [www.vascotland.org.uk](http://www.vascotland.org.uk)

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**Recruiting volunteers**

**How will you match volunteers to your roles?**

For some volunteer roles, you might take a very informal approach and simply have an introductory chat with potential volunteers about the role and their own motivations and interests. For other roles, however, you might want to have a more formal matching process. This is appropriate when you’re looking for volunteers with specific skills and experience, or when the role has a greater level of responsibility such as supporting children or vulnerable adults, handling money or using specialist equipment.

Remember that the matching process is two-way: you’ll be matching the right person to the right role within your group, club or organisation, but it’s also a chance for each potential volunteer to decide that it’s the right role for them.

**Key elements of matching processes can include:**

- Application forms.
- Role descriptions.
- Taster days;
- References.
- Interviews.
- Criminal record checks (if volunteers support children or vulnerable adults).
- Health checks.

You can find more information about selection and all aspects of the volunteer recruitment process in the Volunteer Scotland good practice guides.³
Finding volunteers

There are many ways of finding volunteers which will differ by area, so here are some things to consider.

Word of mouth

The most effective tool to promote volunteering continues to be word of mouth. If people already involved with your group or organisation tell others about your volunteering opportunities and say that volunteering with you is fun and rewarding, you’ll recruit more new volunteers.

You may therefore wish to start with your current members, audiences and participants, as they already have a connection with the group or organisation. Advertising through other voluntary arts groups in the area might also be a good idea.

Volunteer Centres

Volunteer centres form part of the Third Sector Interfaces in each local authority area in Scotland. Volunteer centres are local organisations providing support and expertise within the local community, to potential volunteers, existing volunteers and organisations that involve volunteers. They can help you design volunteer roles, advertise them and find the right volunteers for you and are a good place to start if you have any questions about volunteer management.

For contact details of your local volunteer centre, please see the Voluntary Action Scotland website.

Social media

Alongside advertising online, think about how you can use social media to promote your volunteering opportunities. Post messages on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to reach out to people who might be interested in volunteering with you.

Targeted recruitment

You might be looking for people with specific skills or interests to volunteer, or you might be aware of a need to increase the diversity of your volunteer team. Think about how you can use targeted recruitment to reach out to groups of people including young volunteers, older people, skilled professionals or families.

Your local volunteer centre can support you with targeted recruitment in your local area.

Equality and diversity

There are many benefits to working with a more diverse group of volunteers, including:

- Organisations can always benefit from fresh approaches.
- Incorporating a wider range of ideas might help your organisation improve its service and work more efficiently to fulfil its aims.
- Reflecting the local community can boost an organisation’s credibility and improve its ability to focus on local needs.
- Volunteering should offer everyone a fair chance to contribute and avoid excluding people.

Voluntary Arts Scotland has a helpful Briefing on Equality and Diversity. Download for free from the ‘Resources’ section at www.vascotland.org.uk

Voluntary Arts Scotland

Voluntary Arts Scotland has a ‘Jobs and voluntary positions’ section on its website at www.vascotland.org.uk. Email info@vascotland.org.uk to advertise your volunteer positions for free. We can also include you in our fortnightly e-newsletter.

4 www.vascotland.org/tsis/find-your-tsi
5 www.volunteerscotland.net
Policy

It’s a good idea to have an equality and diversity policy that covers volunteers. At its simplest, such a policy states that the group or organisation will not discriminate directly or indirectly on the basis of differences other than suitability for the role.

As well as saying what it won’t do, an equality and diversity policy can include a statement about how the group or organisation will aim to create an inclusive environment, including positive action. Positive action involves encouraging less well represented groups to volunteer.

Be aware of potential barriers

Ensuring everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in your activity means considering people’s individual circumstances. People can be excluded from volunteering by things such as their financial situation, the time available to them and other commitments such as childcare responsibilities.

Some of the things you might want to think about include:

- Physical accessibility of the venue or location.
- Requirements of the role, such as time commitment.
- Which out-of-pocket expenses you cover.
- Whether there is a religious aspect to your organisation or activity.
- Whether a role requires volunteers to have a PVG membership (Protection of Vulnerable Groups).
- Whether involvement in your group or organisation is restricted to a particular group of people, for example only to female volunteers.

More information

You can find more information in the Volunteer Scotland good practice guides and from your local volunteer centre. Voluntary Arts Scotland also has a helpful Briefing on PVG membership. Download for free from the ‘Resources’ section at www.vascotland.org.uk

Retaining volunteers

Although it’s not always possible (or desirable) to keep the same volunteers for a long period of time, it’s worth looking at what you can do to reduce the turnover of volunteers in your organisation. After all, you’ve already gone through the process of recruiting, inducting, training and supporting the volunteers. In addition, when they leave they may take a wealth of knowledge and experience with them.

Retention means keeping people involved with your organisation in some way. Volunteers might leave for a number of reasons, often due to changes in personal circumstances, and yet they might wish to continue supporting the organisation and/or return to volunteering at another time. Think about how you can continue to involve people in alternative ways such as fundraising or volunteering on a more ad-hoc basis. It’s worth asking volunteers who are leaving whether they would like to remain on your mailing list for future updates.

Create rewarding roles

You should build retention into your volunteer programme before you even begin recruitment by creating roles that are attractive and rewarding, as well as meet your objectives. Find out from volunteers what they would find attractive and rewarding to ensure you meet their expectations.

When drawing up a role description think about what you need the volunteer to do. What is there in the role that would attract and keep volunteers? A chance to learn new skills? Meet new people? An opportunity to put existing skills and knowledge to good use? And what does the role have to offer a volunteer in the medium to long term?

This means being aware of volunteers’ motivations to ensure you meet their needs as well as your own.
Support and supervision

Providing good quality support and supervision helps to retain volunteers:

- Ensure you know how they feel about the role.
- Identify any issues that may impact on their volunteering and making them feel valued.

Reward and recognition

Volunteers are more likely to stay with you if they feel they are an important part of the organisation and that their contribution is recognised and valued.

There are many ways of rewarding volunteers, and different people value different forms of recognition, but some suggestions are:

- Involve volunteers in discussion and decision making.
- Hold celebration events.
- Provide certificates after a certain length of service or at the completion of a project.
- Formal accreditation, eg NVQs.
- Identify opportunities for additional responsibility and personal development.
- Ask longer term volunteers to mentor or buddy new volunteers. Have social activities such as group lunches or coffee mornings and say ‘thank you’!

Gifts

Some organisations like to reward their volunteers with gifts. This is okay as a ‘one-off’, but any regular gift could be seen as payment, which you want to avoid as it could suggest a contract of employment. This isn’t to say that an organisation can’t reward their volunteers with gifts when they leave or after many years of service, but these should be small tokens, such as flowers or chocolates.

Exit interviews

When volunteers leave your organisation, exit interviews are useful for finding out why they are leaving, what they are moving on to and a chance to evaluate their experience as a whole. Recording the results of exit interviews can help you to think about your volunteer programme and how to develop it.

You can find more information in the Volunteer Scotland good practice guides.

Voluntary Arts Scotland has a helpful Briefing called ‘Fostering a long-term relationship with occasional volunteers’. Download for free from the ‘Resources’ section at www.vascotland.org.uk

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Induction and training

The purpose of induction and training is to ensure that volunteers are able to carry out their role as effectively as possible and with confidence.

Induction

Induction introduces new volunteers to the organisation and their role in it. You may want to consider putting together an induction pack that contains most of the information. You might also send this to anyone who enquires about, or shows an interest in, volunteering with your group or organisation so they can make an informed decision about taking up an opportunity.

Pre-arrival

This forms part of the recruitment process, and will consist of any information about the organisation and the role that you send the volunteer before they start such as:

- Information about the organisation and what it does.
- Volunteer role description(s).
- Contact details and directions and/or map of how to get there.

Organisational induction

Explaining what the organisation’s goals are, and how it goes about achieving them, and helping the volunteers understand where they fit within the organisation as a whole. You might include:

- Background/history of the organisation.
- Mission statement.
- Services provided and client groups.
- Organisation chart.
- Talks from paid staff and established volunteers about their roles in relation to volunteers and the organisation as a whole.
Local induction

Ensuring that volunteers have a clear understanding of their role and how they will carry it out, as well as site-specific information and guidance on support and supervision mechanisms, including:

- Health and safety issues, e.g. first aid procedures, accident reporting, policy on smoking, emergency exits and evacuation procedures.
- Financial issues, e.g. how to claim expenses (and what can be claimed).
- Volunteer agreement (what the volunteer can expect from the organisation and what's expected of volunteers).
- Arrangements for support and supervision, including allocating a named point of contact such as a key member of staff, mentor or buddy
- Problem-solving procedures for difficult situations involving volunteers, including dealing with inappropriate behaviours and how volunteers can raise concerns.
- Training programme identification.
- Relevant policies, e.g. confidentiality, data protection, phone/internet use and social media.

Group versus individual induction

The way you approach the induction process will depend on a number of factors, including the number of volunteers you have starting at the same time and the amount of space you have for group activities.

Group induction can take less time overall and allows for discussions to take place where appropriate. It can also enable volunteers to start to build relationships, make friends and provide a peer support system for each other.

On the other hand, if you only have volunteers starting from time to time, it might put them off if they have to wait a while for enough people to get started, so it could be as well to offer induction on an individual basis.

Some things might be covered more effectively in a group context, such as confidentiality for example, and you may choose to wait and deal with that as part of a specific training session when you have more people to contribute to the discussion.

Training

Providing training that is useful and relevant to volunteers can help to develop their skills and competency and can also motivate them to increase their involvement.

The training your volunteers receive will depend entirely on their roles and on the numbers of volunteers you need to train at any one time. Initial training may be required to enable the volunteer to carry out their role effectively and depending on the role this might take hours, days or weeks to complete. Ongoing or refresher training might also be required to keep volunteers' skills up-to-date or to enable them to develop within the organisation and take on further tasks.

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

On-the-job training

The most common way of training volunteers and probably the most economical is on-the-job training. This is most appropriate if you only take on one volunteer at a time and the work they will be doing is relatively straightforward.

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.

External training

A second method is to 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 deliver the training purely for your organisation.

This can be an expensive way to buy training, but it’s worth it if your volunteers need to learn some more complex skills. You can also make it more economical, if you are buying the training in, by letting other local organisations participate and sharing the cost that way.
In-house training

Another method of delivering training is to develop an in-house programme. This works best if you can take on volunteers in groups and you need to train them in fairly complex tasks or ideas.

There are lots of good ‘train the trainer’ courses out there to enable the people delivering the training to keep up-to-date on current thinking about learning styles and training techniques. You could involve volunteers in a training role, either as development for current volunteers or as a new volunteer role for which you can recruit people with existing skills in delivering training.

You might also consider asking volunteers to take part in staff training if it’s relevant to their roles. As well as saving money and time, it will also introduce volunteers to staff and help them to feel part of the team.

Support and supervision

All volunteers need support and supervision to be able to contribute effectively within their roles, but the form that this takes will vary for different roles and different organisations. For example, volunteers contributing at a one-off event might need different support to a long-term volunteer.

The kind of support you provide will depend on the nature of the volunteer role and the needs of the individual volunteer, but key elements can include a thorough induction, agreed role descriptions, appropriate training for the role, and ongoing opportunities to communicate both by email and in person.

Don’t pre-judge what support someone might need - ask them as part of the induction process and on an ongoing basis. Some people may need a little extra training or coaching, while others may lack confidence and need reassurance that they are doing things correctly. Think as well about the support that you’re able to offer for people with additional needs and how you could involve a volunteer who is accompanied by a support worker.

You can find more information in the Volunteer Scotland good practice guides.  

Peer support

It’s worth considering peer support so that volunteers are able to support one another in their roles. This could be through a buddy system, in which experienced volunteers support new ones. As well as providing support for new volunteers a buddy system is a good way of recognising the expertise of experienced volunteers. Don’t forget that a buddy needs to know exactly what’s expected of them in this role and not every experienced volunteer would be a suitable buddy.
Another option for support is holding regular volunteer meetings. These are a chance for volunteers to collectively contribute to the work and daily life of an organisation, and a chance for them to share their experiences. You could also hold joint staff and volunteer meetings to offer both groups the opportunity to learn from each other and understand their respective roles.

Supervision meetings

Regular supervision meetings may not be appropriate for all models of volunteer involvement, but for many volunteers it’s a good way of ensuring they have a chance to give and receive feedback.

Avoid supervision being seen as an ‘appraisal’ by using different language for volunteers than you would use for staff and making the meeting as informal as possible. Reassure volunteers that it’s a chance to talk in a private space, and that it’s as much about you listening to the volunteer as you talking to them.

Questions to ask in supervision meetings include:

- What’s going well?
- What isn’t going well?
- Are there any other tasks you would like to do?
- Do you feel there is any support or training you need?

Where regular supervision meetings are not appropriate to your involvement of volunteers, for example when you involve volunteers on a one-off basis, you should consider finding other ways of sharing and receiving feedback. The above questions are still likely to be a useful base for such conversations, but of course they may need to be adapted to the situation.

Difficult situations

Encourage volunteers to raise problems or concerns with you in person at any time during their volunteering. It’s much easier to deal with a problem at an early stage than let it grow into something which disrupts the work of the volunteer or even the whole volunteering programme.

Always aim to deal with concerns or complaints from volunteers informally at first. If volunteers feel that their concerns or complaints have not been resolved, make sure they know the procedure for dealing with complaints and encourage them to put something in writing to you so that it can be dealt with formally.

Also aim to give clear and consistent feedback to volunteers, particularly if you have a concern about their performance or behaviour. Make sure you let volunteers know when you are pleased with their work and when you have concerns don’t be afraid to raise them. Always remember that the problem is the behaviour not the individual, and refer back to your volunteer agreement and the mutual expectations that you agreed at induction.

If there is a more serious issue that you need to raise with a volunteer about their performance or behaviour, make sure you follow your organisation’s procedure for dealing with difficult situations. Offer the volunteer a chance to discuss the situation in person, keep clear records, and if you reach a point where you need to ask the volunteer to leave, make sure you give a clear explanation and give the volunteer the right to appeal this decision.

For more information about how to deal with difficult situations involving volunteers, please see the Volunteer Scotland good practice guides.

Expenses

Volunteering is unpaid, so volunteers should not receive a payment or salary for their contribution, but at the same time people should not be left out of pocket as a result of volunteering. If volunteering comes at a cost to people, this makes it difficult to involve a diverse range of people. It’s therefore good practice to reimburse a volunteer for all the expenses they incur, where possible, to make sure volunteering is open to all.

Whilst this should be straightforward, there are a number of legal and good practice issues to be aware of.

Be open and honest

The most important thing is to be open and honest with your volunteers from the start about which expenses you are able to reimburse and the process for volunteers to claim expenses. Individuals will then be able to make an informed decision about starting volunteering.

Be clear about what expenses will and won’t be reimbursed, any limits on the amount that can be claimed, and the process for submitting expenses claims, especially noting that receipts will need to be provided.
Why reimburse expenses?

By ensuring that no volunteer is out-of-pocket due to their volunteering, a group or organisation will be increasing the potential number of volunteers that might support it.

Expecting volunteers to cover their own expenses could be a barrier to people with low incomes or little spare cash. It could also deter people who feel that they are already making a significant contribution of their time.

Refunding volunteer expenses is a legitimate financial element of any volunteer programme, so groups and organisations should always take account of potential volunteer expenses in funding applications and budgets.

Which expenses should be reimbursed?

In general any reasonable expense that is incurred as part of the volunteering activity. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Travel, including to and from the place of volunteering.
- Meals and refreshments.
- Care of dependants, including children.
- Equipment.
- Protective clothing.
- Administration costs such as postage, phone calls, stationery etc.

What is ‘reasonable’?

Some expenses will be necessary and have a set cost, such as protective clothing and stationery. It might be worth considering buying these items centrally and distributing them to volunteers, rather than each individual purchasing their own, both to ensure the correct equipment is bought and to lower costs by buying in bulk.

For expenses such as meals and refreshments it might be useful to set a limit. Many organisations do this so it’s worth checking to see what others in your area do. Also think about what the general costs are in the local area, e.g. local bus or train fares, to be able to judge ‘reasonable’ expenses.

How to reimburse expenses

The process of reimbursing expenses should be based on a simple principle: only reimburse actual out-of-pocket expenses. This means volunteers will need to submit receipts that show what they have had to spend as a result of their volunteering.

Be volunteer friendly

Be clear about what expenses will and won’t be reimbursed. Be clear about limits on the amount that can be claimed for expenses such as meals.

Try to reimburse expenses as soon as possible. Try and reimburse in cash or by bank transfer rather than by cheque as this can often be inconvenient and delay payment.

It’s okay to provide expenses payments in advance, for example through a petty cash system, as long as receipts are provided once the money has been spent and any remainder is returned. This can be particularly helpful for volunteers with a low income who may find it difficult to cover costs upfront.

If the group or organisation can only process expenses claimed within a certain timeframe after costs are incurred make sure volunteers know this so they don’t miss the deadline.

Develop a simple expenses claim form. This should ask for the date of the expense, the amount spent and what the money was spent on, with space for the volunteer to sign and for a member of staff to sign and authorise payment.
Encourage all volunteers to claim expenses

Some volunteers may feel that they do not need to claim expenses, however, ensuring everyone claims expenses will help you to determine the full cost of your volunteering programme. This will help in forecasting volunteer budgets and applying for appropriate funding. It’s therefore important to explain this to volunteers to encourage everyone to claim.

If a volunteer really doesn’t want to have their expenses reimbursed, encourage them to claim the money and then donate this back to the organisation separately. This not only means you can track the amount the organisation is spending on volunteering, but donations can also be increased by adding Gift Aid. Guidance is available on the HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) website - see the section ‘Expenses paid to volunteers’.¹⁰

Do not pay a flat rate

Volunteers should not be paid a flat rate for their expenses. This is because any money given to a volunteer over and above out-of-pocket expenses is regarded as income by HMRC. This would then render the entire payment liable for tax, not just the portion above the actual expense, and it could also affect payments if the volunteer is in receipt of state or other benefits. Paying a flat rate could also be regarded as forming a contract between the volunteer and the organisation, leading to a volunteer being granted the same rights as employees, including the national minimum wage.

The duty of care

Generally, a duty of care arises where one individual or group undertakes an activity which could reasonably harm another, either physically, mentally, or economically. A duty of care can arise in many ways which may not always be obvious, for example:

- Loaning equipment to others; charity walks and sponsored runs; running fetes or fairs.
- Organising day trips or selling food at a charity stall.

Basic principles

Commit to good health and safety practice

We strongly recommend that, as far as possible, all organisations meet the same health and safety requirements for volunteers as are demanded by law for paid employees. If an organisation has no employees, it may not be able to achieve the same standards of health and safety as are required for employees, however by aiming to accomplish this the organisation will demonstrate to its volunteers and the outside world the value it places on them and their contribution.

Health and safety policy

A health and safety policy is the foundation on which to develop procedures and practices. It also announces the organisation’s commitment towards good health and safety standards.

Organisations with fewer than five employees are not obliged to have a written policy, but are strongly advised to do so. If an organisation involves volunteers, they should always be included in the health and safety policy as a matter of good practice. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has examples of model health and safety policies and a template which can be used for creating your own.¹²

Health, safety and welfare

All employers must provide a safe place to work which is clean and free from hazards, to reduce the risk of ill health or injury, and organisations involving volunteers should aim to do the same. A safe system of working is required, such as having proper procedures for handling dangerous substances or lone working either on or off-site. There should be adequate supervision and training and up-to-date information should be provided.

¹¹ www.volunteerscotland.net/organisations/resources/good-practice-guides
¹² www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/write.htm
**Risk assessment**

Risk assessment is a technique for identifying and mitigating potential hazards involved with any activity. Risk is assessed by identifying a hazard and assessing the degree of harm it could cause against the likelihood of it occurring. The assessment then indicates what measures need to be put in place, if any, to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Make sure any risk assessments that you complete for your organisation include volunteers who are involved in the activities. You might also need to complete additional risk assessments for any volunteering activities that are additional to the ongoing work of the organisation.

For more information, including templates, visit the HSE website.\(^{14}\)

**Control of Substances Hazardous to Health**

The COSHH regulations require employers to control substances that can harm workers’ health. All employers have a legal duty to assess the workplace for risks to health which may be caused by substances hazardous to health. They must take all necessary steps to control any risks identified. Organisations involving volunteers should aim to do the same.

For more information, please see the HSE website.\(^{14}\)

**Fire safety and risk assessment**

All public and community buildings, whether owned or operated by an employer or an organisation without employees, must meet minimum levels of standards so that the risk of fire is reduced. We recommend contacting your local fire brigade for advice.

Visit the ‘Resources’ section at www.vascotland.org.uk for a number of helpful Briefings on risk assessment and health & safety, produced by Voluntary Arts Scotland.

**Registering your organisation’s activities**

All employers must register their existence with the HSE or the environmental health department in the local authority. Organisations without employees only have to register if they take part in certain activities. An organisation should always check with the authorities if they are in any doubt about the need for registering activities.

For more information, visit the HSE website.\(^{15}\)

**First aid**

All employers have a legal duty to make a first aid assessment. The need for first aid will depend on the organisation’s activities. For instance, an outward bound centre will have very different needs from a morning coffee club. Organisations without employees are not bound to conduct a first aid assessment, although it is clearly good practice. It can also be useful to have at least one first aid trained volunteer and to involve volunteers in the first aid risk assessment process.

In certain circumstances there may be a legal duty to provide first aid facilities. For example, if an organisation holds a public event without first aid facilities and someone is injured, they may have broken their duty of care. An organisation should always check with the authorities if they are in any doubt about the need for registering activities.

More information is available from the HSE website.\(^{15}\)

**Accidents and ill health**

Under health and safety law, employers must report and keep a record of certain injuries, incidents and cases of work-related disease. There is no legal requirement to record every accident, only those that meet the definition of ‘serious’. However, keeping records will help you to identify patterns of accidents and injuries, and will help when completing or updating your risk assessment. Your insurance company may also want to see your records if there is a work-related claim.

Information about what needs to be reported and how is available on the HSE website.\(^{16}\)

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\(^{14}\) www.hse.gov.uk/coshh

\(^{15}\) www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid

\(^{16}\) www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/reportable-incidents.htm
Insurance

All groups and organisations that involve volunteers should consider what types of insurance they need to put in place to cover them for that involvement. Due to the variation between insurers and policies we can only offer general advice. All groups and organisations should seek specialist advice for more detail.

When purchasing insurance a volunteer involving group or organisation should:

• Ensure that the policies explicitly mention volunteers and covers them.
• Check if there are upper and lower age limits for volunteers.
• Ensure that the policies the types of activities that the volunteers will be doing.
• Conduct a risk assessment for each of the roles that volunteers will be performing. This will help your insurer to tailor your policy to suit your needs.

Employer’s liability insurance

Employers must have employer’s liability insurance by law. It covers paid employees in the event of accident, disease or injury caused or made worse as a result of work or of the employer’s negligence.

This insurance does not automatically cover volunteers. There is no obligation to extend the policy to cover volunteers, but it is good practice to do so. The policy must explicitly mention volunteers if they are to be covered by it.

Public liability insurance

Also known as third party insurance, it protects the organisation for claims by members of the public for death, illness, loss, injury, or accident caused by the negligence of the organisation. A group or organisation should therefore consider having it in place if its activities could affect members of the public in this way.

Public liability insurance generally covers anybody other than employees who come into contact with the organisation. This should explicitly include volunteers, covering them against loss or injury caused by negligence of the organisation if they are not covered by employer’s liability insurance.

It also protects for loss or damage to property caused through the negligence of someone acting with the authority of the organisation, which would include the actions of volunteers. Public liability cover should therefore clearly cover loss or injury caused by volunteers. In some cases a volunteer could be sued as an individual for damage caused to a third party, so the organisation’s public liability insurance should indemnify them against this.

Insurance for volunteer drivers

If an organisation owns the vehicle being used, then it is responsible for arranging insurance. If the volunteer owns the vehicle, then they are responsible for arranging insurance and informing their insurer about their volunteer driving.

For more information, please see the Association of British Insurers (ABI) website. Voluntary Arts Scotland has a helpful Briefing called ‘insurance for voluntary arts groups’. Download for free from the ‘Resources’ section at www.vascotland.org.uk

Voluntary Arts Scotland has a helpful Briefing called ‘Insurance for voluntary arts groups’. Download for free from the ‘Resources’ section at www.vascotland.org.uk
Monitoring and evaluating a volunteer programme

There are many reasons to monitor and evaluate your volunteer programme, including:

- Ensuring your volunteers have a good experience.
- Identifying areas for improvement.
- Providing information to funders and assessing the programme’s impact.

What is monitoring?

Monitoring is the process of collecting information so that programmes can be reviewed and updated as necessary. Information for monitoring can be collected daily, monthly or quarterly.

What is evaluation?

Evaluation involves analysing the information you have collected to answer questions about how well the programme is doing, and to identify any gaps and improvements you can make. This will usually be done every six months or annually.

Evaluation literature often refers to ‘inputs’, ‘outputs’, ‘outcomes’ and ‘impact’:

- **Inputs** are the resources used to operate a programme, e.g. time, money and materials;
- **Outputs** are the products and services the programme delivers, e.g. training for volunteers, or one-to-one support for isolated people;
- **Outcomes** are changes that come about as a result of the programme, e.g. enabling people to develop new skills or a reduction in social isolation; and
- **Impact** is the broader or longer term effects of the programme, e.g. improved mental health or improved community cohesion.

Deciding what to monitor

What you monitor will depend on the aims and objectives of your programme. For example, if you involve volunteers in order to increase audience or visitor numbers, you will probably want to monitor volunteer numbers, volunteer hours and visitor numbers.

Some outputs you might want to monitor are:

- The diversity of volunteers in terms of age, ethnicity, sex, socioeconomic background etc.
- The number of volunteers recruited by different methods.
- How long volunteers stay with you and the tasks undertaken by volunteers.

Some outcomes you might want to monitor are:

- The change in the number of people engaging with your activity.
- The diversity of those engaging with your activity.
- The quality of the volunteer experience.
- Skills and experiences gained by volunteers.
- Satisfaction with your activity.
- The change in the level of funding to your organisation.

Gathering information

Different information is gathered in different ways. Some data will be quantitative (facts and figures) and some will be qualitative (opinions, comments etc).

Outputs will generally be quantitative, but outcomes may be either. For example an increase in the number of participants is a quantitative outcome of your volunteer programme, while satisfaction with your activity is a qualitative outcome. Ways of collecting this data include:

- Volunteer application forms, feedback forms, questionnaires and surveys.
- Focus groups.
- One-to-one meetings.
- Vox pops (short interviews) and attendance records.
**Evaluation**

Once you have collected the relevant information you need to analyse it, make judgements and draw conclusions. Again, the type of analysis and interpretation will depend on the aims and objectives of your programme.

**Analysis**

Quantitative data will usually be evaluated statistically. For example:

- The percentage increase in volunteers, audiences, participants etc.
- Relative numbers of people engaged from different backgrounds.
- Average length of time a volunteer stays with you and increase in funding per volunteer involved.

Qualitative data will often be evaluated by writing a report about what people have said about your programme, including direct quotations and case studies.

**Drawing conclusions**

Once you have analysed your data you can draw conclusions about such things as:

- The effectiveness of your recruitment methods.
- How involving volunteers affects audience numbers, funding etc.
- What parts of your programme you should keep and what needs to change. What information you still need to gather that you don’t already have.

Visit the Voluntary Arts Scotland ‘Resources > Publications’ section at [www.vascotland.org.uk](http://www.vascotland.org.uk) to view ‘Tear up your tick boxes’ - an alternative approach to monitoring and evaluation for voluntary arts groups.

**Demonstrating impact**

The impact of your programme is the broader or longer term effects it has on, for example, the community, volunteers or the running of the organisation. If you have collected data, analysed it and drawn conclusions, you are well on the way to demonstrating the impact of your programme.

What you need to think about is how to use the information you have gathered and the conclusions you have drawn. This will depend on who you want to demonstrate your impact to and why. For example, you may want to:

- Show that you have met a funder’s expectations.
- Gain new funding;
- Increase community involvement in and support for your organisation. Establish relationships and partnerships with other organisations or have an effect on local or national policy.

It is therefore a matter of how you draw your conclusions and the method of presentation. Usually a report is produced which is then sent to the audiences that have been identified, presented at meetings and events, promoted via the press etc.

**Involving volunteers**

Think about how you can involve volunteers in the process of monitoring and evaluating your volunteering programme. You might want to ask people about their experiences through focus groups or surveys, but also consider how you can draw upon people’s skills in data analysis, for example, to support you in your work.

Also think about how to share the results with volunteers themselves. If you’re monitoring and evaluating the volunteer programme, volunteers will be interested to know what you find, and if you’ve asked volunteers for feedback or to complete a survey it’s important to share the results and explain what will happen as a result.
In law there is a presumption that any copyright created by an employee in the course of their employment will be owned by the employer, unless the employee and employer have agreed otherwise.

However, if a volunteer produces an original work in the course of their volunteering then they own the copyright to that work, even if it is created specifically for an organisation. This means that the work cannot be reproduced or changed without their permission.

Therefore, if a volunteer is taking photographs, designing materials or creating artwork for your organisation it may be sensible to take steps to ensure that your organisation will be able to use these works in the long term without worrying about copyright.

Are there any exceptions to copyright?

There are a few exceptions where you are able to reproduced copyrighted work without permission, but the only ones that are likely to apply are if it is for use by a disabled person who can’t access it in its original format or in teaching.

However, if you are copying large amounts of material and/or making multiple copies then you may still need permission. It is also generally necessary to include an acknowledgement.

Other rights

Apart from copyright, volunteers will have the economic right to make money from their work and the moral rights to be identified as the author (or director) of the work and to object to derogatory treatment of their work.

Whilst economic rights are generally agreed when copyright is assigned or licensed, moral rights will remain with the creator of the work unless they too are explicitly waived.

Gaining permission to use works created by volunteers

There are two main ways in which you can gain permission to use works created by volunteers:

1. Assignation and 2. Licensing.

Assignation

Individuals can assign copyright which means transferring full or partial ownership of the copyright to an individual or an organisation. Volunteers can assign copyright to organisations for which they are producing original work.

You could ask your volunteers to sign a statement to the effect that:

• Control of copyright is being given to the organisation.
• Control of copyright will be given in exchange for a small sum of money.
• Exchange of money relates to control of copyright for material produced, rather than for hours of work done.
• The work may be used/replicated/reproduced in all possible scenarios.
Licensing

Individuals can license their work, retaining their copyright but allowing an individual or an organisation to use it within the terms of the license.

You may want to seek legal advice in drawing up an appropriate agreement to use with volunteers. Areas the agreement should cover include the parties involved, the work the license covers, the terms of the license, i.e. how the work can be used, and the duration of the license.

Alternatively, there are organisations that provide licenses. For example, Creative Commons licenses provide simple, standardised alternatives to the “all rights reserved” paradigm of traditional copyright.

Links

www.gov.uk/copyright
www.copyrightservice.co.uk/
http://creativecommons.org/

If you want to further develop your volunteering practice, Investing in Volunteers (IiV) is your next step.

Investing in Volunteers is the nationally recognised UK quality standard with a unique focus on volunteering.

Investing in Volunteers gives organisations the opportunity to improve and develop practice and recognises commitment to high quality volunteer management.

The IiV standards, which are based on good practice principles, cover the four main areas of volunteer management:

- Planning for volunteer involvement.
- Recruiting volunteers.
- Selecting and matching volunteers.
- Supporting and retaining volunteers.

The standards are applicable to all volunteer-involving organisations, regardless of size or number of volunteers involved.

For more information visit the Volunteer Scotland website or contact us on 01786 479593.

www.volunteerscotland.org.uk
Case study - Omiros Vazos

“During my last year in Theatre Studies at Glasgow University we were given the chance of some work experience through a placement at a professional company. I expressed a desire to work for a contemporary theatre company whose shows incorporated a lot of state-of-the-art technology, and Cryptic fit that description.

The point of our work placements was to help us learn how theatre companies are run and what they do. I was assigned to work in a technical capacity, as my intent was to gain some hands-on experience in setting up a theatre show.

Everyone at the Cryptic office was very supportive and helpful. I have made friends through working with them and met some very interesting people who I was able to network with while working on the project.

Volunteering is a great experience when you are starting out and you should make the most of it. Ask questions, meet people, forgive yourself for making any mistakes and often reflect on your experiences at work so that you get better at it.”