



## INTRODUCTION TO... MANAGING VOLUNTEERS

Most community projects use volunteers in some way. They are a great way to involve your community, to attract new skills, and to help your project grow. But volunteers are not just for when you can't afford staff. Their motivations are often different, and different laws might apply to how you manage them. There is often not much support to help you manage volunteers, so we've created this simple guide.

### 1. BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT

Think about the different roles and skills you need. Write them down, sort them into groups, and consider advertising to fill each role. To help volunteers understand what you want from them, you could create a simple volunteer pack - tips and guidance can be found here: [goo.gl/frtP2T](http://goo.gl/frtP2T))

### 2. BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN OFFER

Some volunteers simply want to give their time or skills. Others would like something in return. Be clear from the outset what you can and cannot offer. Will you provide training? A reference? Or will you cover expenses?

### 3. LEARN WHERE TO FIND VOLUNTEERS

Advertise in local places like a church or community centre. Ask local businesses for help too, as many will have 'social responsibility' obligations that mean they offer skills, time and support for free. Also, look for volunteer websites where you can advertise (in the UK for example, try [do-it.org](http://do-it.org)).

### 4. UNDERSTAND PEOPLE'S MOTIVATION

Ask potential volunteers gentle questions to find out if their values align with yours, and what kind of role would be best for them. For example, they might want a simple task that they find relaxing or they might want to be challenged and develop new skills.

### 5. MAINTAIN A GOOD RELATIONSHIP

It is important to know that they like their role, or whether they need a new challenge. Take time to speak to them, whether formally or informally. Volunteers might also want to connect with each other: you could give them the opportunity to do this through training days or shared meals.

### 6. THANK THEM!

Every volunteer should be thanked for their work. As well as words of gratitude, consider an occasional invitation to a celebration, like a Christmas meal or party.

### 7. GIVE FEEDBACK

'Voluntary' shouldn't mean 'unprofessional'. Help make sure they do a good job by giving regular feedback. But be careful not to criticise unless you know it will help them to improve.

### 8. THINK ABOUT HOW TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

If you have lots of volunteers, plan how to respond if conflicts or problems arise. If you don't have time to manage everyone, try pairing together an experienced volunteer with a new one. Or, one volunteer could take responsibility for checking on others and reporting back to you. (Here are some further ideas: [goo.gl/Zcrrqv](http://goo.gl/Zcrrqv))