



---

## **Volunteer Practice Guidance Note**

### **Creating Volunteer Role Description**

---

#### **What is a role description?**

A role description is basically a document that outlines what a volunteer will do, what skills they need, and what the volunteer will get out of it.

An example could be a newsletter contributor. What they would be doing could include suggesting topics for articles, conducting interviews and writing articles. Some skills they would need would be creative thinker, ability to use Microsoft Word, etc. Potential benefits for the volunteer might include experience in writing for a nationally distributed newsletter and helping support the organisation to keep in touch with its members.

#### **Why is having one important?**

- It helps volunteers who are thinking about applying know what they're being asked to do. This will help them decide if it's right for them.
- It gives the volunteer more information on the role as there might not be time to cover when they first get in touch.
- It's a great way of thinking through if you've covered everything that a volunteer might want to know and that you need to have in place.
- Once the volunteer has started, they will know what they need to do.
- It will also help you support them as you can refer to the volunteer role description when catching up about how they're getting on.
- A volunteer role description helps other people in your organisation understand how the volunteer role fits with their own.
- It defines the role as a volunteer role.

## Where should I start?

Your organisation needs to define what volunteering is, why involve volunteers, and what is an appropriate volunteer role. We suggest you use the [Volunteer Charter](#) to develop volunteer roles, and talk to staff, board members and current volunteers to get their ideas. It's really useful to include them in the process so they can get their ideas and perspectives. It will also help everyone understand the value of involving volunteers in your organisation. After all, they might be working with the new volunteer once they've started.

## Some things to think about include:

- What is volunteering?
- Why involve volunteers
- What is an appropriate volunteer role?
- What is it that you are looking for volunteers help with?
- Why is this activity best for a volunteer and not a member of staff?
- How will meeting this need add value to the service you provide?
- How will this volunteer role sit with the wider staff roles?
- Are you replacing a paid job in the organisation through this volunteer role?
- Is it the kind of thing that a volunteer would want to do?
- Would you do it?
- What are the risks, or health and safety issues?
- How often is a volunteer needed and who will be their point of contact?
- What are the benefits to the volunteer?
- Do you have the correct resources in place to support this volunteer role, to offer support, training and out of pocket expenses.

## What should I include?

<b>Role Title</b>	Name of volunteering role. Try and make it appealing and relevant to the role.
<b>Outline of the role</b>	Introduce the organisation and what you're looking for a volunteer to do. You could bullet point the main tasks here.
<b>Skills, Attitudes and Experience needed</b>	Outline what's needed to do this role. Maybe the volunteer has to have a driving license or it's important that they enjoy meeting and talking to new people.
<b>Benefits to the volunteer</b>	Let a potential volunteer know what they could get out of doing this role. It might be that they'll be offered training, gain experience, grow in confidence or get more fresh air and exercise!
<b>Where</b>	Where will the role be based?
<b>When</b>	This can outline exactly when in the week the opportunity takes place, how often it is and if it's ongoing or short term. You can also cover what commitment you hope from volunteer. You should approach this informally as something you hope the volunteer can give, not something that they have to do.
<b>Support</b>	Who will be a point of contact for the volunteer, resources in place to support this volunteer role, to offer support, training and out of pocket expenses.
<b>How to apply/what happens next (selection methods)</b>	If the volunteer now wants to apply, what do they do next and then what happens. Let them know if they have to meet you for an informal interview or become a PVG scheme member and if you cover the cost of this.
<b>Any questions</b>	Who can the volunteer get in touch with if they still have questions?



Volunteer Scotland  
Jubilee House, Forthside Way, Stirling FK8 1QZ  
T: 01786 479593 E: [hello@volunteerscotland.org.uk](mailto:hello@volunteerscotland.org.uk)  
W: [volunteerscotland.net](http://volunteerscotland.net)



[@volscotland](https://twitter.com/volscotland)



[@volscotland](https://www.facebook.com/volscotland)



[@volunteerscotland](https://www.instagram.com/volunteerscotland)