Knowledge Gateway

Practice Guidance and Information

Creating a Positive Volunteer Induction

Why is an induction important?

An induction is a way to introduce a new volunteer to your organisation.

This helps them feel part of the team and helps you make sure they have all the information they need to have a great experience.

How should I deliver an induction?

That is completely up to you and what you think your volunteers need. You might deliver it face to face with a group of volunteers, you might want to give a handbook and allow people to read it in their own time or you could deliver it online. You might even use all these options!

Depending on the size of your group or organisation and the type of volunteering role the induction could be over a longer period of time. If you are meeting face to face this could be arranged anywhere that suits both you and the volunteer.

If you do choose to do it face to face it may take a number of meetings with the volunteer to cover it all and complete the induction. Meetings don't have to be in the main building of the organisation though; it could be in the place where the volunteering will take place.

Remember people are giving up their free time to attend your induction so try to make it as interesting as possible rather than simply talking them through all the policies and procedures relating to the volunteer.

It can be useful to use the experience of existing volunteers and involve them in developing the induction for new volunteers.

What should I include?

Every organisation is different, but we've included some common questions volunteers have when they start, and some ideas on how to answer them.

Who am I volunteering with?

- Explain what your organisation is trying to achieve. Your mission statement, values, a short history and future plans can be useful here.
- Identify who or what benefits from them volunteering.
- You might want to invite some of the people that benefit to discuss why they are going to be doing such good work. This is often what most volunteers are excited about so spend some time talking about the difference they could make.
- Explore how volunteers fit within the organisation or group. What is your role as the volunteer manager, who else will be working with them?
- Who else volunteers with them? A "getting to know other volunteers" session can build your team and help them feel part of something.

What will I be doing?

- Introduce the role and what they will be doing.
- Explain what support is available to them, including who to speak to if they have any ideas/problems.
- If the volunteering is place specific, then show them round where they will be volunteering and introduce them to people.
- Explain the relevant policies and procedures. This can be a little dry so try to make it interesting! You might also want to provide the policies in a handbook that they can read in their own time.
- Discuss how they can remain safe when volunteering.
- Discuss the purpose of the volunteer agreement and seek a signature as a commitment (if you have one).
- Explain how they can claim appropriate out of pocket volunteer expenses, related to their volunteer role.
- Provide any equipment they may need such as an ID badge or uniform.
- Discuss any hopes and fears they may have.
- Provide an opportunity for volunteers to make suggestions of other skills / talents they could share with the organisation.

It can be useful to create an induction checklist with content relevant for your organisation or group leaving a space for the volunteer's name, a signature and date. A copy in the volunteer's induction pack means they can see what's coming and the progress they're making.

You could keep these completed checklists in the volunteer's personal file as evidence of their training and support. For the organisation it shows you're fulfilling your Health and Safety requirements.

What next?

Remember to regularly review the checklist and keep it up to date. It is useful to get feedback from volunteers and involve them in the review process. Even if you don't make big changes, by looking through it and refreshing it you are emphasising its importance to the organisation.

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The Knowledge Gateway is created and led by **Volunteer Scotland**

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This is a regularly reviewed resource. If you have any suggested updates, please email Volunteer Scotland at **hello@volunteerscotland.org.uk**