Knowledge Gateway

Practice Guidance and Information

Top tips for involving older volunteers

These Top Tips were produced by Age Scotland, Volunteer Scotland and the National Inclusion in Volunteering Group.

Age Scotland is the national charity representing older people and their rights and interests in Scotland. We work to improve the lives of everyone over the age of 50 so that they can love later life.

By reflecting on the following we would hope that these points would help you make your volunteering offer more inclusive:

1. Review recruitment and training processes to ensure they are easy to access and open to all. Some volunteers may be online and have access to emails and apps to support video calling, others may prefer to send in a hard copy of their application and receive supported training materials in the post.

2. Identify any opportunities to offer flexibility in volunteer roles with regards to location, hours and responsibilities. Consider any support, equipment and adjustments and provide examples of how a volunteer can be supported in their role.

3. Have open conversations to get to know your. Volunteers in the later stages of life have a wealth of knowledge, experience and transferable skills. Identifying these could allow their skills to be adapted and utilised in other areas of your organisation you may not have previously considered.

4. While recognising existing skills and experiences, it's important to offer continued learning. For example, as we move further into a digital era more volunteers may welcome the opportunity to learn technology skills.

5. Many volunteering opportunities are suitable for people living with dementia. Consider training for staff responsible for recruiting and training volunteers to enable them to communicate more effectively with people with dementia and support them during their volunteering. Befriending Networks offers free Dementia and Social Connection Training.

6. Consider Age Inclusive Training and Unconscious Bias Training to increase knowledge and awareness of age bias in the workplace. Young people volunteer for many other reasons apart from building their CV, older adults

volunteer for many other reasons than just having some time on their hands. We all have unique reasons and aspirations for volunteering – for older adults, this may include reducing social isolation, having meaning in their life and socialising.

7. Should an individual wish to end their volunteering due to many of life's challenges, it's important to celebrate their achievements and the impact they have made rather than focusing on original aims and goals.

Need some more help?

If you would like more help or advice in relation to this guide, please contact us:

- **Age Scotland**
- Telephone **(Volunteer Scotland)**: 01786 479593
- Email: **knowledgegateway@volunteerscotland.org.uk**

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This resource was created in partnership with:

National Inclusion in Volunteering Group

age Scotland

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

Volunteer Scotland

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