

'You make the difference'

A supported volunteering Resource Pack
for volunteer coordinators

Connecting charities, volunteers and businesses



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Introduction

There is a volunteering opportunity for everyone. With the right volunteer management, support and guidance, people of all abilities can get involved. The magic is making sure your volunteering opportunity and volunteer are right for each other, that the relationship is mutually beneficial and that the right structures are in place to enable the volunteering opportunity to take place in a safe and productive environment.

In this way, equality and diversity sit at the heart of volunteering and as such we believe that volunteering in all its forms should strive to be an inclusive activity; this includes volunteers with visible and invisible disabilities, and people with additional support needs.

The [Power of Volunteering](#) commits us to work together in partnership to:

improve accessibility of volunteering opportunities, by creating more high quality, well supported, accessible volunteering opportunities.

This resource pack focuses on ways to build support structures within your volunteering programme that make it more accessible to people with support requirements.

We will answer questions about supported volunteering, offer good practice tips and examples of successful volunteering placements and signpost where to go for further advice, guidance and peer knowledge of volunteer-involving organisations experienced in this area.



Nick, Volunteer at Pavilions

'I have volunteered for Pavilions for over a year, helping to facilitate a group and talking to people in reception. After being in a hopeless situation once myself it is now rewarding, 11 years later, to be able to plant the seeds of inspiration and ignite the journey of recovery in others. Volunteering is a necessary part of my own recovery.'

Nick is registered blind



*"Alone we can do so little, together
we can do so much"*

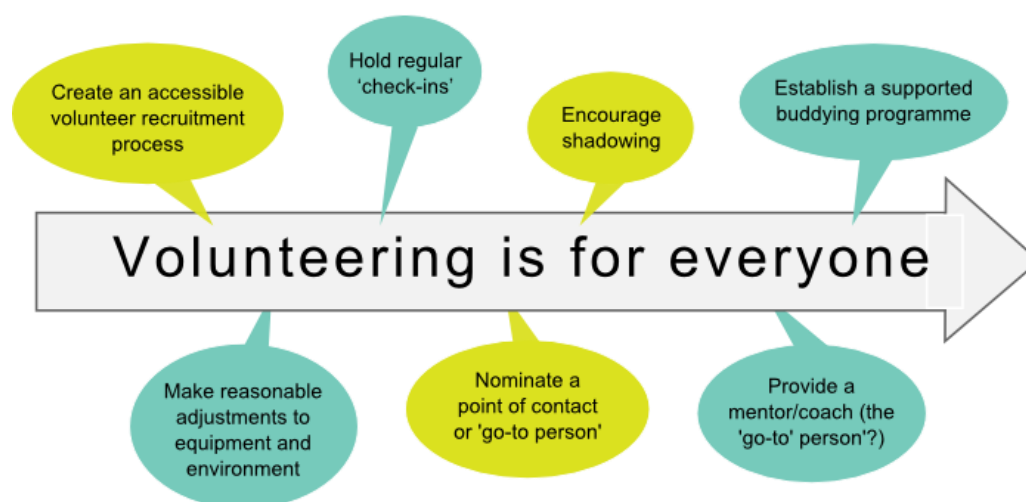
Helen Keller, Disabled activist and humanitarian

What is supported volunteering?

Supported volunteering refers to volunteering opportunities that have specific support structures in place that respond to identified support needs. For some people, these structures are the crucial element in making volunteering possible or not.

In this way, supported volunteering structures and programmes are often a positive response to engaging people with disabilities and/or those with additional support needs such as learning disabilities, autism, Asperger's, mental health issues, dual diagnosis or those with a physical disability or impairment.

This resource concentrates on the 'support structures' most typically utilised by organisations and groups which may range from making some reasonable adjustments to having a fully structured supported buddying programme. Some of the possible support interventions are shown below:



The support required is fundamentally linked to a clear identification of needs; providing the time and space to explore and listen to volunteers' needs and motivations is fundamental to this process. The level of support required will depend on the disability and the person and in counselling a person-centred approach, it is recognised that a wider and more complex picture exists in which it is essential not to make assumptions:

- Firstly, specific supported structures are not necessarily a pre-requisite for these groups to get involved. For example, disabled people can often, with relatively small accessibility adjustments, engage in volunteering without additional 'support structures' in place.
- Furthermore, supported volunteering programmes are not and should not be thought of as limited to those organisations working with and supporting people with learning disabilities, autism, Asperger's, mental health issues, dual diagnosis or those

with a physical disability or impairment. In other words, people with learning disabilities do not necessarily want their volunteering opportunities limited to a 'learning disability' environment.

- Lastly, supported volunteering programmes should not be exclusive to these groups i.e. where 'supported volunteering structures' are in place they will benefit everyone who engages in your volunteering programme.



Jonny, volunteer at [Jubilee Library](#), came to volunteering through [Grace Eyre](#)

"I really enjoy working in the Jubilee Library. It is very self-rewarding. Everyone tells me how much they appreciate me. If a customer is looking for a CD and I find it for them, it gives me a real sense and great feeling of self-satisfaction"

Jonny Scachter, 24th March 2017



Good practice guidelines for developing supported volunteering programmes

This section of the pack can be read in conjunction with our online [Good Practice Guide](#)

Plan

- Presume someone can volunteer until proven otherwise.
- Ask yourselves if your volunteer programme represents different groups that make your local community.
- Is it necessary that someone has to be able to complete all areas of your role description? Can your role description(s) be broken down into smaller roles or tasks so that it can more easily accommodate the volunteer's needs and abilities?
- Don't see barriers as a hindrance, rather as changes which will improve your volunteering programme for everyone.
- Be prepared to make reasonable adjustments to your work practice and environment; invest in equipment and software, look at how you communicate, and what office adaptations you are able to make.
- Ensure everyone in your organisation is aware that supported volunteering is part of your volunteering programme. Raise awareness in your team, and be clear about the benefits and what your group could be missing out on by not being inclusive i.e. :
 - approaching tasks from new and different perspectives, with different opinions
 - bringing new and different skills
 - adding vitality to your team
 - creating greater cohesion amongst groups of people who may not usually have contact with each other.
- Talk to staff and volunteers about their roles, concerns, expectations, and support for them.
- Organise staff and volunteer training.
- Where possible, include other staff and volunteers in identifying volunteer roles and remits for the development of your supported volunteering programme
- If your premises are not accessible, consider other options such as volunteering from home/work or other place of their choice.
- Consider other volunteering options such as:

- Volunteering with a friend/family member or support worker
- Volunteering with a buddy or in a group
- Coaching
- Mentoring
- Be honest and upfront about your capacity and the level of support you can offer. Don't raise unrealistic expectations of what is possible; it is unfair to take on a volunteer who you are unable to support appropriately as this may have a negative impact on the volunteer themselves, as well as other staff and volunteers within your organisation.

Good Practice Example - O N C A

"We are in a listed building which means we cannot alter the building in anyway. This is a problem as our toilet is up 3 stairs. We have chatted with local businesses that have accessible toilets to ensure that anyone who needs to use the toilet whilst at O N C A can do so without hassle at the local café and pub."

O N
C A

Recruit

- Think about where and how are you publicise your opportunity. In addition to where you usually advertise, think of other ways you might be able to reach your audience, such as:
 - contacting support and community workers
 - social media
 - community radio and local newsletters
 - printed publicity for local outlets
- Be positive with your use of language and include wording about your inclusive approach such as 'We actively encourage applications from people with disabilities'. Use Plain English, Easy Read and positive images on your website and leaflets where people can easily recognise themselves. Visit these government webpages for guidance on [inclusive communication](#) and [accessible design](#).
- Make your interview and application process more accessible; be less formal, more relaxed, and focus on people's positive attributes. Only ask what you need to know.

- Make sure the volunteering opportunity is right for the volunteer and the organisation.
- Offer taster sessions and one-to-one meetings to explore suitability for both the organisation and the prospective volunteer.
- Add in your quality marks and pledges including the [Disability Action Alliance Volunteer Charter logo](#)
- Let people know the benefits of volunteering in your organisation.

"We let volunteers know they can volunteer as much or as little as they like, we also ask what their interests are and why they want to volunteer, so where possible we can help out with something that interests them."

O N C A

Support

- Use your induction to be clear about the role and the support available and how to access it.
- Check your own behaviour; don't make assumptions.
- Allow volunteers to define their own needs; they may not be what you think!
- Check that you both understand each other.
- Is other support required? Talk to your volunteer and, if relevant and if there is consent, think about who else can be involved in meeting their volunteering support needs, such as a support workers, family and/or carers.
- Provide a main point of contact or 'go-to person' within your organisation for volunteers rather than a generic email or telephone number.
- Consider the timing, venue and relevance of any support you provide.
- Consider other options for support (e.g. telephone, Skype, Whatsapp, or similar)
- Expenses can make the difference between whether someone is able to volunteer or not. Supported volunteering may require additional expenses, but it is important to balance this with the benefits of having that person volunteer with you.



Chris, Reception Volunteer at Grace Eye

“I am really interested with this reception role because I am very skilled and enthusiastic learning a lot.”



Develop

- How are volunteers recognised and rewarded? In addition to saying thank you, let volunteers know how their volunteering has been beneficial to the activity
- Check-in with volunteers to establish if they have any future plans that you can support them with through their volunteering
- Identify relevant social and developmental opportunities



Ted, Reception Volunteer at Grace Eye

“I get satisfaction from helping people who might be worse off than myself even if I do have a disability.”



Evaluate the impact of your volunteering programme

- Are you reaching disabled volunteers and volunteers with additional support needs, and then plan how to include identified group/s at a time or within your capacity.
- Are you meeting the needs of their needs?
- Don't forget to share your positive experiences of including disabled volunteers and volunteers with support needs and let them know about the difference that they have made.

Good Practice Example - St Barnabas Hospices

We had a volunteering enquiry from the Aldingbourne Trust on behalf of a young man with autism. They were hoping to find something to suit him, with a quiet environment and tasks which were simple to grasp and repetitive rather than often-changing, preferably on computers which he liked using. He had a support worker who was able to accompany him.

After consulting with staff we identified a way he could assist with inputting survey information, with the help of his support worker.

He now comes in occasionally and uses a computer in our library which is kept free at the time he's here. This means he is able to volunteer at a time which suits him, normally for just a couple of hours.



If you get your good practice right then your volunteering programme will be accessible for everyone regardless of whether or not they have a disability.

Further help and resources

Advice and support on developing your volunteering programme



Community Works - Volunteer Centre

We want to make sure voluntary and community action makes our society and local areas better it does, and that it has the greatest positive impact on everyone. To achieve this we create the support and networks that help people and organisations to use their time, expertise and energy effectively.

How we can help you:

Through the volunteer centre, we offer support and guidance in all areas of volunteering including recruitment, good practice and programme development and inclusion. We offer training courses in volunteer management, volunteering strategy development and effective brokerage. More widely, Community Works offers a fuller programme of training courses, events, and consultancy services for organisations.

Good Practice Guide:

<http://bhcommunityworks.org.uk/voluntary-sector/volunteering/good-practice-guide/>

Contact details: www.bhcommunityworks.org.uk

Tel: 01273 23 48 60 (Volunteer Centre services)

Tel: 01273 23 40 23 (Main office line)



Possability People

A charity that makes more things possible for you in your life, no matter what your situation. Possability People works with disabled people, older people and young people, or anyone with an impairment or long term health condition.

How we can help you:

We can provide information and advice on how to make your volunteering opportunities more accessible to disabled people.

We deliver disability confident workshops and can tailor these sessions to include information on accessible volunteering.

Please visit our website for further information on accessible volunteering or contact us for a chat or to ask any questions you may have:

www.possabilitypeople.org.uk/volunteer/

Contact details:

www.possabilitypeople.org.uk

Tel: 01273 89 40 40

katharine@possabilitypeople.org.uk

Local volunteer coordinator peer support



Amaze

Gives information, advice and support to parents of disabled children and children with special needs in Brighton and Hove.

How we can help you:

Amaze offers volunteering opportunities for young people 18-27 years old with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

Contact details

amazebrighton.org.uk

Tel: 01273 77 22 89



Brighton and Hove Food Partnership

Offers advice to individuals and their support or advice workers about volunteering at community gardens and community food projects. Many projects have an open access policy and some are able to offer activities for people who have additional support needs.

We can give you information about this and are also happy to offer a face-to-face meeting / advice session for anyone with additional support needs.

How we can help you:

Please see our Referrers guide:

bhfood.org.uk/bhfp-resources/guides/159-garden-referrals-guide/file

Contact details:

www.bhfood.org.uk

Tel: 01273 43 17 16

FABRICA

Fabrica – Brighton’s Centre for Contemporary Art.

Volunteering at Fabrica is flexible, creative and inclusive. Our volunteers contribute to the day-to-day running of Fabrica and help deliver our programme. From the beginning Fabrica has recognised the value of volunteers to the organisation. We believe that while volunteers certainly have a role to play in the day to day running of the organisation, particularly front of house, they also bring their own skills, experiences and interests and by so doing necessarily impact on the organisation.

As a charity and a public funded arts organisation, Fabrica operates on limited resources. Our commitment to diversify our volunteer programme, to represent contemporary society, and to connect with different groups in our community is our starting point. With this intention, we reach out to different organisations that support people with access needs. Working in partnerships, sharing knowledge, opportunities and experience, we support the sustainable infrastructure that enables us to deliver our mission, ambition and aspiration as Brighton’s Centre for Contemporary Art.

How we can help you:

Please visit our website www.fabrica.org.uk/volunteering

Contact details:

Ratna Jan Bibi, Gallery Manager

Tel: 01273 778646

Email: ratna.bibi@fabrica.org.uk

Website: www.fabrica.org.uk



Grace Eyre

Helps adults with learning disabilities maximise independence and life skills through a wide range of activities in Brighton, Hove and beyond. Grace Eyre supports individual service users through service user-led forums, social events, projects and activities.

How we can help you:

We are happy to have a chat with any volunteer coordinators who have questions about involving people with learning disabilities.

Contact details:

www.grace-eyre.org

Kt Banwell

Volunteer Manager

Mob: 07436 093 170

Tel: 01273 222015

Email: volunteering@grace-eyre.org



GuildCare

Our mission is to deliver innovative and life-changing care services which help older people, younger people with special needs, those with dementia or a learning difficulty, and their carers, to share and enjoy a richer family and community life.

How we can help you:

If you would like to chat about how to support disabled people and people with additional needs into volunteering, please feel free to contact us.

Contact details:

www.guildcare.org

Tel: 01903 600602

Claire Thomas

Email: claire.thomas@guildcare.org

O N C A

O N C A believes that the arts are capable of catalysing dramatic shifts within society. Our mission is to inspire positive action in response to current cultural and environmental urgencies, through creativity, courage, collaboration, playfulness, learning and impact.

We curate and support a wide range of arts events and activities, all of which respond in some way to environmental change or pressing social issues. We do this from our gallery and performance space in Brighton, UK. Upstairs at O N C A , we also run a small community and workspace for artists, charities and businesses working towards positive change in society.

We offer volunteering opportunities to disabled volunteers as part of our inclusive volunteering programme. Two of our staff are currently learning BSL (British Sign Language) to increase our inclusion further for volunteers to support artists and visitors to the gallery and we are planning to have our gallery handout in large print for people with limited vision.

How we can help you:

We have a page on our website which you can view to see how we make accessibility visible [ONCA.org.uk/about/accessibility/](https://onca.org.uk/about/accessibility/)

Contact details:

[ONCA.org.uk](https://onca.org.uk)

Tel: 01273 60 71 01

National information and guidance



Disability Action Alliance

'A cross sector network of organisations committed to making a difference to the lives of disabled people'

Contact details:

disabilityactionalliance.org.uk



Gov.uk

The government's public information website has a number of helpful pages including:

www.gov.uk/browse/disabilities



NCVO

'Champions the voluntary sector and volunteering because they're essential for a better society.'

How we can help you:

blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2015/11/05/the-importance-of-supported-volunteering/

knowhownonprofit.org/how-to/how-to-develop-an-inclusive-supported-volunteering-scheme



NHS England

Has a document, which although applies to patient and carers, contains excellent pointers in increasing accessibility and can be incorporated into volunteering good practice.

How we can help you:

www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/access-info-implmntn-guid.pdf



Voluntary Organisations Disability Group

'Represents leading not-for-profit providers of services and support to disabled people'

How we can help you:

www.vodg.org.uk/publications/volunteer-management-toolkit/

Contact details: www.vodg.org.uk

Software

A number of software programs are available to help with accessibility; RNIB have listed many of these on their website. See links below for free and paid-for options:

[Free software collated by RNIB](#)

[Paid for software collated by RNIB](#)

We would like to thank staff and volunteers at Amaze, Brighton and Hove City Council Library Service, Brighton and Hove Food Partnership, Fabrica, Grace Eyre, GuildCare, Pavilions, O N C A, Possability People and St Barnabas Hospices for contributing to this resource.

Community Works Volunteer Centre, June 2017

If you need this information in a different format just get in touch to discuss your needs.

Voluntary and community action makes our society and local areas better. We're here to make sure that it does.

Community Works is a registered charity in England and Wales (no 1087481) and a company limited by guarantee (no 3895635)

Community Works

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[linkedin.com/company/brighton-and-hove-community-works](https://www.linkedin.com/company/brighton-and-hove-community-works)



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A COMMUNITY WORKS SERVICE

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