



**Volunteer** *Centre*

Merton

Training busy staff to succeed with  
volunteers

# Before they start

- Where will their “space” be?
  - Does it need a desk, storage, access to a computer, telephone?
  - If so, where?
- What other resources may be necessary?
- Who will supervise them?
- Do they need specific training for the role?
  - If so, how will that be given and by whom?
  - Will the training be given before or whilst volunteering?

If there is a delay between recruitment and the CRB check coming through, plan some induction events in the intervening period:

- Attending team meeting
- Being shown around the library
- Sitting in on a group session
- Learning how to use the on-line resources
- General 'keeping in contact' with them until they can start

# Think about:

- When checks are done, give them their start date and time
- Who will meet them and show them around? Give them the name in advance – it would be preferable if this person was their supervisor
- Whoever is to meet the volunteer needs to prioritise this over other tasks
- Basics – tea/coffee/toilet
- Take time to check with them that they have read and understood the Information Booklet
- Ask whether they have any questions

# Think about:

- This is also a good time to remind them that there is a one month trial period on both sides, i.e. for the library and for the volunteer to decide if they want to commit to the role. Fix a date for this
- Meet other members of the team – staff and volunteers
- Make sure they have something to do that first day
  - **Shadowing a member of staff**
  - **A clear task to achieve, and the tools to be able to achieve it**
  - **At the end of their session, check with them how it went and when their next session is**
  - **Thank them**

# During the first month

- Do they know who they can ask with any query?
- Have a short conversation with them during their session to check they are happy with what they are doing, and doing what you need done
- Make sure that if they are shadowing someone as part of their training and that that person is available when they are in

At the end of the first month, it may be useful to talk with other members of the team to see how they have felt about the new volunteer's involvement

- Have a one-to-one session with the volunteer
- How have they found the first month?
- Is it what they expected?
- If not, what is different?
- How have you felt about what they have achieved?
- What, if anything, can be altered to meet their needs?
- Thank them for all that they have done over the month, and let them know what to expect over the coming month
- Plan the date of your next support session with them
- If you are clear that they have not achieved what you had expected, could you extend the trial period for another month?

# Support – why is it so important?

Volunteers need to know:

- That they are doing what is required of them
- That what they are doing is worthwhile
- That they are contributing
- The boundaries of the organisation
- That they are valued
- What to do if things are not going so well

# Support – why is it so important

## The supervisor needs to know:

- That the volunteer is being effective
- That the volunteer is doing what is required
- That the volunteer is happy with what they are doing
- That the volunteer is committed
- If there are things they can do to enable any of the above
- Of any new developments which might affect any of the above
- If there are problems

# Support

Regular support, at a time previously fixed, and prioritised, is essential to ensure that the volunteer feels valued.

It does not have to be a formal session, but it does have to cover all the issues.

Think of ways supervision can be offered in a less formal, but equally effective, way

# Celebrating volunteers

You can value volunteers in other ways as well

Keep in mind what motivates them:

- Experience
- Self satisfaction
- Looks better on a CV
- Meeting new people
- Opening doors for the future
- Feeling valued
- Prepares you for going into “real” jobs via contacts/discipline
- Taster – try something different
- Insight into other people’s way of life, experiences
- Help local communities
- Learning new skills
- Giving back
- Change lives
- Dispel boredom
- Building confidence and self esteem
- You can decide what you want to do, and what you don’t
- “Change the World”