

TIPS ON WRITING ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

Writing a Volunteer Role Description

Once you have a clear role that you are recruiting for, you can start thinking about advertising for volunteers. Below are some tips.

Keep it short: provide enough information to interest people but keep it short enough to hold their attention.

Think about it: work out why someone would want to volunteer for you and who is most likely to volunteer and focus your advert on this.

Building the description around different headings is useful. Some suggested headings would be:

- Title of role – be specific, don't just call it a volunteer position;
- Purpose of role;
- Main activities/tasks;
- Qualities/experience/skills sought (where relevant);
- Training provision;
- Benefits to volunteer – what will they get out of this role?
- Availability required;
- Location;
- Main point of contact/supervisor;
- Reimbursements – what the volunteer can expect in return.

Writing a volunteer role description will also help you focus on the practical elements of your organisation's volunteering programme. It is important to make sure that all the necessary resources and procedures are in place before the volunteer arrives. For example, if the volunteer needs any particular equipment or supervision for their work, make sure you know when these will be available.

Using Volunteer Role Descriptions

Volunteer role descriptions form an important part of an organisation's recruitment process. They help to give the volunteer an accurate idea of the work they will be doing and also ensure that the volunteer is attracted by the tasks as well as the organisation's wider aims. They also help volunteer managers to focus on what kind of volunteer they actually need and avoid mismatching people and tasks.

A detailed volunteer role description is particularly helpful if you are recruiting volunteers through a volunteer development agency or other third party. It saves time and disappointment on both sides if a potential volunteer knows as much as possible about the role before contacting the organization direct.

It is important for volunteer managers to offer on-going support to volunteers and a volunteer role description can help you to structure supervision sessions. Referring to role descriptions is also a good way of evaluating your organisation's programme and demonstrating the breadth of what your volunteers do.