

Volunteer Coordinators' Forum Framework

“It has given me some useful and supportive links with some great people and organisations. I have learnt lots from the workshop sessions that have been provided and come away with new tools to implement in my work.”

- Forum Participant



Aims of the forum as decided by the forum:

- That people responsible for volunteer management in the local areas we work in feel supported in their role, connected with their peers and have the opportunity to develop their skills and share their experience in the management of volunteers to the benefit of the volunteering environment
- That the volunteers in the local areas we work in will have a positive experience of their volunteering; underpinned by effective, and developing, volunteer management
- That volunteering activity across the local areas we work in will be strengthened by greater co-ordination of activity and increased partnership working
- That access to volunteering to those at risk of exclusion will be increased

Who comes to the Volunteer Coordinators' Forum?

The Volunteer Coordinators' Forum is specifically open to anyone who has *direct* responsibility for managing or coordinating volunteers in the local areas we work in, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity.

The forum sits within a wider programme of networking and learning activity delivered through Community Works conference programme. Our approach to the forum responds to:

- A 'feeling of isolation' clearly identified by volunteer coordinators
- The lack of 'specific' space to address volunteering issues; volunteering is often 'lost' in wider Third Sector agendas
- A need to maintain a focus and clarity around the specific support needs of Volunteer Coordinators

- A need for volunteer coordinators to network, learn and offer peer support.
- A need for investment in the 'work'force that will unlock the potential for volunteers to address some of the wider social issues the City faces

What themes does the Forum address?

The forum responds to the learning and support needs identified by members; underpinned by development of good practice around Planning, Recruitment, Support, Development and Evaluation.

Equalities, Diversity and Fairness sits at the heart of the forum activity, in particular promoting an open approach to developing a higher number and improved quality of opportunities that are accessible to all.

Lastly, the forum content and activity is informed by key local strategic documents and issues emerging at a national level. In Brighton and Hove, one of the key local strategic documents is the [Power of Volunteering](#) vision.

How the Forum works

The forum is structured around the following areas, which were identified by members:

- News and Information sharing
- Learning element
- Campaigning and influencing role on role and purpose volunteering opportunities
- Collaboration and networking across organisations

1. Meeting in person

i. Forum Meetings

There will be 4 forum meetings per year, 3 of which are incorporated into wider Community Works Conference days.

Invites to the forum will be issued by email in advance of the meeting and published in our conference information. In order to keep attendance at these meetings at a workable number, spaces may be limited.

Dates for the forum network meetings will be available on our website, www.bhcommunityworks.org.uk/

We will archive all notes and resources from forum meetings and disseminate them to the full VCF list. Notes and resources from the forum meetings are archived by Community Works and disseminated to the full VCF list

ii. Peer learning and support opportunities

The volunteer centre will develop and link volunteer coordinators in with further learning opportunities either attached specifically to the volunteer centre or the wider activity of Community Works such as Action Learning Sets or mentoring.

2. Meeting 'virtually'

i. Volunteer Coordinator Forum

When signing up to the forum, your details will be added to the volunteer coordinator forum list which is maintained on the Community Works database. This database is used to form the VCF E-list.

This is a platform where you can discuss or post items regarding volunteering management and support. As a network group, we strongly encourage you to use this to your advantage as there is a lot of information, knowledge, experience and good practice which can be shared in the city.

This list is also used to send out invites, disseminate relevant information on volunteering, publish good practice developments, advise on volunteering campaigns and other information directly related to the forum or volunteering. Information held in this database is not shared under any circumstances; an individual can be removed on request.

ii. Social Networking platforms (Facebook / Twitter)

The Volunteer Centre has a presence on the following social networking sites:

Facebook [facebook.com/bhcommunityworks](https://www.facebook.com/bhcommunityworks)

Twitter twitter.com/bh_cw

These sites useful if you need to communicate information to a wider audience than can be achieved within the forum.

3. Campaigning and Influencing

The Volunteer Coordinators' Forum provides an invaluable source of information on the experiences of volunteer management and volunteering on the frontline. The volunteer centre will seek the views of forum group on a range of local and national volunteering issues as well as bring local and national campaigns on volunteering to the attention of Volunteer Coordinators. The volunteer centre may also occasionally conduct surveys or request case studies to support the above.

4. Forum secretariat

We host the forum within its wider network programme. The volunteer centre provides support to this activity by:

- Leading on agenda setting
- Facilitating and delivering information within forum meetings
- Sourcing external training/presentation and group input
- Circulating forum discussion and/or resources as appropriate

5. Evaluation

The volunteer centre is responsible for evaluating the forum and reporting to its funders and other stakeholders. To achieve this, the volunteer centre asks forum participants to :

- Share feedback on their experience of forum meetings
- Complete an end of year survey consulting upon members' experience of the preceding year and what they would like to see in the year ahead
- From time to time, contribute to a case study of their experience being a part of the Forum network