

# Young Volunteers - Good Practice Guide

Connecting charities, volunteers and businesses



## Young Volunteers

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In recent years, young people's voices have become more vocal and visible. Young people tell us clearly that they want a say in their future and to be a part of what is happening around them.

Young people have shown that they are equally able and willing to contribute to society as be recipients of services and support. Volunteering figures show that 16-25 year group still have one of the highest rates of formal volunteering hours challenging the negative way that young people have been represented over the years, [NCVO UK Civil Society Almanac 2018](#)

We are presented with an opportunity to support young people in their goal. By being more inclusive of young people, opening up volunteering opportunities, we can support young people in their desire to contribute to society, taking on productive roles in our society.

Opening up more opportunities to young people, means expanding volunteering opportunities not only to the 16-19 age group, but also to 14-16 years.

To motivate, welcome and empower young people into volunteering, we need to act as enablers and well as recipients of their time.

### What volunteering offers young people:

- New skills
- Increase in wellbeing
- A pathway to education and employment
- References for work and college
- Increased confidence, self-respect and self esteem
- Respect from others
- Leadership skills
- Increased independence
- A social environment
- New perspectives

### What young people offer you:

- Energy
- New perspectives
- Creativity
- Young person's input on what young people need
- Increased capacity
- Access to their peer group – for service development and information about your service
- Service-user involvement and voice
- Diversity
- Sincere honesty

***"I think it's good that there is a guide for services looking to do more volunteering with young people. It's really good to have volunteering experience on your CV, especially if you haven't had a job before or you don't have many other qualifications"*** Young Person from Allsorts

## Good Practice Tips

1. Do not make a presumption on ability or skill level based on age. Talk to young people to get an idea of what they are interested in and what they are their capabilities
2. Ask young people want to give and gain from volunteering
3. Role and life related experience aren't everything. Young people bring ideas, creativity and enthusiasm. They may see the world differently because of their existing experiences.
4. Spend time talking to young people about what they would like to be involved so that the roles created are volunteer led.
5. Offer taster sessions
6. Create new roles or be flexible with your current role and task descriptions so that they are attractive to young people and enable them to volunteer
7. Be aware of restrictions for young people such as school/college times
8. Be accessible – Make your publicity accessible to young people – this includes language, style and where you post your opportunities.
9. Speak to young people and young people's services for the best places to reach other young people
10. Risk assess each role or task with the young person. Assess what a young person can do and what you can do to reduce risk. Young people have less life experience and some may lack maturity, so when explaining safety arrangements, be prepared to describe more fully what's needed, without relying on assumptions of pre-existing knowledge.
11. Ensure that the volunteering opportunity has the correct supervision and support in place for the young person
12. Ensure you can cover expenses
13. Ensure your insurance is in place for young people
14. Ensure that your safeguarding policies and procedures are up do date and all workers and volunteers are clear on these, including your online safety protocols.
15. For guidance on what a young person can do or the hours they can volunteer, it is advisable that you reflect the conditions and legal requirements for child employment. These are outlined on BHCC website. We recommend you contact your local authority for an employment certificate, especially if they are volunteering in a profit making enterprise such as a charity shop. The permit is about ensuring the safety of the child. The application will lead to a discussion with parent/guardian and school. School refusers will not necessarily be refused a permit, but will need to be able to say that the volunteering/employment will be to the benefit of the child. There is no need for a permit if the volunteering placement is short term.
16. DBS - There may be people in your organisation that you will need to DBS check. This will not apply to everyone in your organisation. For more information on DBS is available on [Community Works website](#). You cannot DBS young people under the age of 16yrs old, but young people 16-18 may undergo a DBS check.
17. Reward and recognition – let young volunteers know they are valued. Make sure volunteers are aware of the positive impact they are making and celebrate their achievements
18. Have a clear progression routes to enable and support young people move from using a service, to being a volunteer, including being a trustee
19. Manage expectations
20. For minors, ensure you get written parent/guardian consent for volunteering to take place.

***“In the past I have done some volunteering at a primary school but they weren't very clear about what I was supposed to do...services should be as clear as possible before you sign up”*** Young Person from Allsorts

## Equality and diversity

It is important to remember, that young people are not a homogenous group. In addition to age, you still need to take into consideration other identities, both when recruiting and supporting young volunteers. Identity may include gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, caring responsibilities along etc. Young people will also have different reasons and motivations for volunteering. It is important to talk to young people about these factors so that you can ensure that the volunteering opportunity is the best match possible and the safest.

## Safeguarding for young people and online volunteering

If you have any questions about young people are safeguarding and want to talk to someone locally, contact Safety Net <https://www.safety-net.org.uk/>

There is a useful online tool available to all organisations working with children and young people to help review and improve online safety. The online compass provides an opportunity to check how well you fare with all the safeguards, policies and procedures you currently have in place. [www.onlinecompass.org.uk](http://www.onlinecompass.org.uk)

[South West Grid for Learning](#) (SWGfL) provide downloadable leaflets on a range of topics, which can assist you review and enhance your safeguarding procedures for children and young people.

## Where to recruit

Youth employment events

Minority community groups

Youth clubs / groups

Schools

## Young trustees

The Charities Commission recognises that there is a lack of representation amongst young people on charity boards. Despite making up 12 per cent of the UK's population, 18-24 year-olds account for less than 0.5 per cent of all charity trustees\* Fewer than 2 per cent of charities actually have a young trustee serving on their board.\*\* This results in organisations missing out on the enthusiasm, energy, individual skills and perspectives brought by young people. The benefits are listed above.

### Tips for involving young people as Trustees

- Make sure young people are clearly briefed on what are the responsibilities of being a trustee
- Try not to use jargon. Use simple language that is accessible.
- Offer young people the opportunity to be mentored by a board member
- Board meetings are not always at times when young people can attend. Consider if these meetings can be made more accessible either by varying the times of meeting or using programmes such as Skype
- If a young person is not able or willing to be on a board, consider other ways they can input into the organisation, for example; champions, ambassadors, service user rep

\*[CAF Mind the Gap \(2012\)](#)

\*\* [Charity Commission - A Breath of Fresh Air \(2010\)](#)

## There are a number of helpful guides online:

[https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/about-us-publications/youngtrusteesreport\\_1682a\\_web\\_080915.pdf?sfvrsn=80dc440\\_8](https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/about-us-publications/youngtrusteesreport_1682a_web_080915.pdf?sfvrsn=80dc440_8)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/trustee-board-people-and-skills>

<https://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/start-up-a-charity/trusteeship/young-people-as-trustees/>

<https://www.wcva.org.uk/volunteering/volunteering-latest/2017/08/two-new-trustee-toolkits-to-help-get-young-people-on-boards>

<https://www.bhcommunityworks.org.uk/voluntary-sector/resources/governance/>

## Helpful links:

[Community Works Volunteering Good Practice Guide](#)

[BHCC](#)

[#iwill.org.uk](#)

[National Youth agency report](#)

<https://www.o2.co.uk/thinkbig/history/young-people>

[British Safety Council](#) – Has a great video introduction to young people, social action and health and safety. They also have some helpful [downloads](#)

## Support for young people

[NSPCC](#) or 0800 5000

[CHILDLINE](#) or 0800 1111

Downloads

[http://www.iwill.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/iwill\\_NCVO\\_A5print.pdf](http://www.iwill.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/iwill_NCVO_A5print.pdf)

[Greater London Volunteering – Increasing Volunteering Opportunities for young people](#)

[Charity Commission – A Breathe of Fresh Air – Young People as Charity trustees](#)

Include something on young people as board members and trustees

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/about.htm> NOTE: ALTHOUGH VOLUNTEERING IS NOT EMPLOYMENT, IT IS SUGGESTED THAT GUIDELINES FOR HOURS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT ARE USED FOR YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

This guide has been produced with feedback and suggestions from young people at [Allsorts Youth Project](#)