

Keeping volunteers

Showing volunteers that they are valued and appreciated is critical to developing a team of happy and productive people, who are working for you not against you.

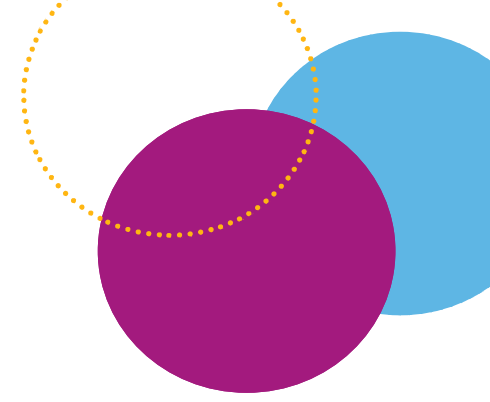
Volunteers are more likely to stay if they:

- Feel appreciated and recognised by the organisation
- Are used effectively and can see that their work is needed
- Feel that they are doing something worthwhile and that they do make a difference
- Know there is the flexibility for them to be able to change or develop their role or commitment if they want to
- Are provided with an opportunity for learning, skills development and personal growth
- Feel confident that they can handle the tasks they are asked to do
- Are adequately supported and supervised
- Have a sense of belonging and being part of a team, and have opportunities to socialise with others
- Are consulted about their work and have the opportunity to contribute to policy and decision making if they want to
- Are welcomed, accepted and supported by other volunteers and paid staff feel that their personal needs and motivations are being met

Volunteers are likely to leave if they:

- Feel unappreciated or taken for granted
- Have too many demands made on them or on their time
- Are asked to do things they don't feel equipped to cope with
- Are given too much involvement and responsibility – or too little
- Have unrealistic or unclear expectations of their role
- End up out of pocket
- Don't enjoy what they do or feel that it's not valuable
- Feel that their time is being wasted or their work badly organised
- Feel isolated, unwelcome or treated differently to others

There are plenty of simple things you can do to help people feel appreciated and part of the team. See overleaf for some ideas...



No cost, or low cost ideas for showing volunteers they are valued:

- Know volunteers by name and take an interest
- Be approachable
- Hold social gatherings or team meetings where volunteers can meet each other
- Chat over a cuppa
- Offer training opportunities where possible
- Give praise
- Say thank you
- Give a reference
- Enable volunteers to pass on their skills/experience to others
- Nominate for awards (or present your own)
- Feature volunteers in publicity, annual reports etc
- Make sure volunteers get to understand the impact of their work
- Ask for their opinions and involve them in decisions that affect their work
- Encourage ideas and suggestions
- Smile!
- Respond quickly to enquiries
- Act on feedback received from volunteers
- Celebrate successes and achievements
- Make use of Volunteers Week or similar external events

If you have a small budget:

- Birthday/Christmas cards
- Certificates
- Volunteer newsletter
- T-shirts or other branded items
- Away day, party or celebration event , biscuits, cake...