

One-off events

One-off events can be a great opportunity to involve new volunteers, particularly people who may not have the time to give more regularly, or people who may not have volunteered before.

This section is a short overview of some key elements of event planning, but is not a comprehensive guide. Further resources and sources of information are listed in **Sheet 20 'How to find out more'**.

The key to successful events is planning ahead. You could use **Sheet 15 'Event planning checklist'** to help you. It has some prompt questions to get you thinking about the different aspects of putting on an event.

Venue, equipment, facilities and refreshments

Choose your venue with care. Consider how many people your venue can accommodate— too big is just as off-putting as too small. Do you need to be near public transport and is there parking available? What facilities are there for people with disabilities?

Other things to consider include the times available for setting up/clearing away and the transport and storage of equipment, displays and publicity material etc.

Make a list of what you will need on the day. Where might you be able to borrow things from? Can local businesses help with donations or other in-kind support?

Think what you will do about refreshments and/or meals if it's a long event. You can find information about serving food at your event on www.food.gov.uk

Permissions and licensing

Certain types of entertainment, or events involving alcohol sales are covered by the Licensing Act 2003. Some premises will already have appropriate licences but if not, you may need to complete a Temporary Event Notice (TEN). Check with your local authority for further guidance and TEN forms.

If you are involving young people under 16 you may need to get parental permission.

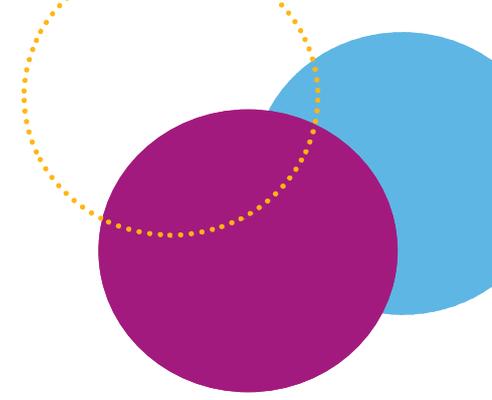
Communications and publicity

Does your event tie in with a campaign, a themed week or day (such as Volunteers' Week or Make a Difference Day), or the launch of a new project or resource? This can be useful in helping to get publicity.

Your local CVS or Volunteer Centre may be able to help with templates for press releases if you want to get your event featured in the local media. Some offer marketing or PR advice/training too.

If you write a press release, remember the five 'W's':

- Who - is the story about?
- What - is the most important angle?
- Why - is it important?
- Where - is it happening?
- When - did it happen/will it happen?



Recruiting and managing event volunteers

Talk to as many people as possible about your event – word of mouth is a great recruitment tool.

Contact other local organisations, clubs, societies and employers in your community to ask for help. Some larger employers may support their staff to volunteer as part of their ‘corporate social responsibility’ programmes. You may want to try and get a feature in the local press, make use of your own or other organisation’s newsletters and websites, or use online social networking sites to generate interest.

Register the volunteering opportunities with your local Volunteer Centre. Allow plenty of time for promotion before your event.

Tips for managing event volunteers:

- Involve key volunteers in planning wherever possible
- Keep records and contact details of all the people who express interest in helping at your event.
- Keep volunteers informed of progress
- Make sure volunteers know where to be on the day, and when
- Set out clear roles
- Brief volunteers on the day of the event – their tasks, timings of the event, who to contact in case of problems, emergency procedures, who they’ll be working with etc.
- Have a system for communicating with all your helpers on the day.
- Ask for feedback from everyone at the end of the event, while things are still fresh in people’s minds – how did it go from their point of view, did they experience any problems, what would they improve for next time?

Safety and insurance

Assess the potential risks and put sensible plans in place to minimise the chances of things going wrong – a really simple risk assessment checklist can be found in the CSV Make a Difference Day Handbook, see **Sheet 20 ‘How to find out more’**.

Risk assessment does not have to be long and complicated. It’s not about having the paperwork in place, it’s about identifying real and practical **actions** – things you can and should do to minimise the risk of harm.

If the event is open to the public, check that you have public liability insurance cover. The venue you are using may have appropriate cover already, or you may need to arrange your own. You may be able to get support with this by working in partnership with other organisations such as the local council.