

## **Avoiding Difficult Situations through Strong Recruitment Activity: Avoiding problem volunteer situations through your recruitment process**

This is part of a training activity. The session explains the importance of a clear and strong recruitment process which involves selection and an induction with boundaries. The activity relates to the following good practice points:

- Re-examine your recruitment procedures

If your recruitment procedures are overly bureaucratic, eg lots of forms to complete, volunteers may decide to reject your organisation before they've even started. You've spent time and effort on advertising your volunteering opportunities, so it would be a shame to put people off so soon. Setting the right tone from the start will show that you are a responsible, professional organisation that values its volunteers.

- Ensure you match the volunteer's motivations and skills to your organisation's needs

If you don't ensure a reasonably good match, then volunteers are likely to be dissatisfied, and the organisation may feel that their contribution is pointless. A good match will ensure that all parties are happy and getting something they want from the process. A list of volunteer motivations can be found here: <http://charityguide.org/volunteer/motivation/why-volunteer.htm>

- Offer a comprehensive induction programme

Most volunteers appreciate a good induction into the organisation. This will include showing them round the building (fire exits, toilets, tea-making facilities), introducing them to everyone, giving them copies of relevant policies and generally making them feel welcome as a new member of the team.

- Give each volunteer a Task Description

A frequent complaint from volunteers is that they don't know what they are supposed to be doing. An equally common complaint from Volunteer Co-ordinators is that their volunteers keep asking them what to do. A well-written Task Description not only helps in the recruitment process, it also gives volunteers a point of reference when they're feeling a bit lost.

**I use this handout in the following courses:**

- **Modular Session: Dealing with Difficult Volunteer Situations**
- **Modular Session: Recruiting Volunteers**

**If you are working through this alone, try looking at the first page first to explore the ideas and knowledge you have – then check your answers with the second page handout. If you are using this with a group, use the first page as a discussion tool.**

**Hope this is useful!**

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<b>What's the problem?</b>	<b>How could we have avoided it?</b>
<b>A volunteer comes to claim £30 of expenses from the last 6 months and complains when there isn't enough money in petty cash.</b>	
<b>A volunteer is complaining to many other volunteers that the reception work he does is dull and tedious.</b>	
<b>A number of volunteers leave after the expensive training is over.</b>	
<b>When a gay volunteer starts, and is open about his sexuality, another volunteer makes inappropriate jokes that many find offensive.</b>	
<b>A volunteer finds the training for his role very hard as his writing skills are low. He doesn't feel he is getting enough support</b>	
<b>A volunteer refuses regular supervision and training</b>	

## How can we avoid difficult situations through strong recruitment?

<b>What's the problem?</b>	<b>How could we have avoided it?</b>
<b>A volunteer comes to claim £30 of expenses from the last 6 months and complains when there isn't enough money in petty cash.</b>	A clear induction, which is traceable A volunteer policy that makes clear when and how expenses can be reimbursed Staff sticking to that policy and being available to reimburse expenses
<b>A volunteer is complaining to many other volunteers that the reception work he does is dull and tedious.</b>	A clear and honest role description at application stage An interview process which selects the person most appropriate for the role, not just the most qualified person An interview process which assesses both skills, and attitude A clearly stated supervision policy – where volunteers should go to feed back A trial period
<b>A number of volunteers leave after the expensive training is over.</b>	A clear role description and expression of hopes and fears Explanation at application stage of cost of training: "please consider your position carefully" Interview process that assesses what volunteers long term plans are, and how they plan to fit the role in
<b>When an gay volunteer starts, and is open about his sexuality, another volunteer makes inappropriate jokes that many find offensive.</b>	Training and Induction that cover sexuality Equal Opportunities question at interview Example equality situations at interview
<b>A volunteer finds the training for his role very hard as his writing skills are low. He doesn't feel he is getting enough support</b>	A short test with interview or application Honest feedback, and a referral to a basic skills course
<b>A volunteer refuses regular supervision and training</b>	Clear explanation of the training requirements of the role at application Interview questions addressing willingness to learn