

Day-to-Day Support and Regular Supervision sessions

Activity: Arranging support for a range of volunteer roles

This is part of a training activity. The session explains the importance of both day-to-day support and also regular times to 'check-in' with volunteers, whatever that may mean for their individual role and needs. The activity relates to the following good practice points:

- **Ensure there is a named supervisor/ contact**

It is essential that volunteers know who to go to with any questions and problems. This information should be included in a volunteer's induction programme, when they should meet in particular their immediate line manager and also any key members of staff and other volunteers with whom the volunteer will be working with.

- **Allocate more experienced volunteers to coach and support newer volunteers**

Many of your volunteers will have a mass of experience and knowledge of your organisations' processes and will see what goes on from a volunteer's perspective. Consider using this to ensure better supervising day to day while making it clear that volunteers can still come to you if necessary. Many volunteers will appreciate experience in supervising.

- **Agree what kind of more formal supervision will happen, how often and when**

Supervision involves regular time set aside for the volunteer to meet with their manager. This is particularly important for volunteers who carry out emotionally-demanding work

- **Be clear about your availability – open door or set time**

It is of course important to be around for volunteers to ask you questions or discuss problems on a day to day basis and not just to give them a day's work and disappear. However, it is also very important to be clear about your availability so that they know when they can approach you.

I use this handout in the following course:

- **Modular Session: Supporting and Supervising your Volunteers**

Hope this is useful!

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You:

You are the volunteer co-ordinator of a conservation charity. Volunteers are involved in all aspects of your work which includes planting and clearing in local woodland areas, wildlife encouragement along rivers, fundraising across London and the general administration of a charity. You work full time.

You deal with the initial recruitment of volunteers but there are four other workers who have some responsibility for overseeing tasks and volunteers. They all work part time – 3 days a week.

The volunteers:

- 100 volunteers who come to informal conservation days once a month. About 30 arrive for each session.
- 3 experienced volunteers who run regular supported volunteering sessions with groups of adults with learning disabilities.
- 20 regular volunteers who do a range of conservation work – some are part of more supported volunteering projects, some are not. Most volunteer around a day a week.
- 5 admin volunteers who volunteer in the office, sometimes with little supervision. They are generally volunteering 2 or 3 days a week.

The Task:

- What kind of regular support should you put in place for each role to make sure people are happy day-to-day? Who should do this and when?
- What kind of regular supervision should you put in place to ensure that the organisation gets the best from all volunteers and that you deal with any issues efficiently? How long should you allow for this supervision?
- How often should regular supervision be for each role? Who should do this?

Please plot your plans in the three month planner attached to ensure that each staff member is able to fit their support and supervision responsibilities in. Remember that all staff have other jobs to do too!

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