



Volunteers carry your organisation's reputation on their shoulders. Their voices can and do go far and wide in singing your praises or spreading bitterness about their volunteering experience with you.

If a person has a negative volunteering experience, this can damage their willingness to volunteer in future. Reflect on this; what would your volunteers say about their experience with your organisation and what would you like them to say?

Five things to consider when recruiting and developing volunteers

1. Think about the role you are creating

How have you identified the need for this role? If you have paid staff, how is this role going to complement the work of your paid staff? If you have no paid staff, think about what volunteers will do and how their work will contribute to your goals as a project or organisation. Healthwatch has a volunteer agreement in place that sets out what we expect your volunteers to do, volunteers sign this as a 'non' legal agreement.

2. Make volunteers feel welcome

It's not enough to say it on your website! How do volunteers feel when they are with you? Is there a commonly understood appreciation across your organisation or project of the value that volunteers bring? Healthwatch provides induction and training for volunteers and regular support and reviews.



3. Help your volunteers to take pride in the difference they make

The role may be small-scale or great but will your volunteers be able to say with pride that they have made a tangible difference? Try to come up with something that shows that you as a volunteer support officer are ambitious for your volunteers. In Healthwatch we hold events during 'Volunteer Week' to share ideas about how volunteers are feeling and give lots of praise.

4. Communicate and manage boundaries

If your volunteers are doing things you haven't asked them to do or are doing things that you have expressly told them not to do, why is that? Healthwatch has role descriptions, set boundaries and communicate with them regularly. This enables volunteers to align their expectations to the Healthwatch vision. Regular communication can keep volunteers involved, Healthwatch sends out weekly emails to keep volunteers engaged.

5. Learn to say goodbye graciously

Goodbyes are loaded with learning for your volunteer and you. Your volunteer may be leaving after many years; leaving will be a milestone for them, and you may need to review your own practice or rethink how their role add values to your organisation. Healthwatch offers exit interviews and sends 'thank you' cards. Goodbye means you are helping a volunteer forward to their next step.



If you would like any further advice on volunteering you can contact Healthwatch Bristol on:

0117 269 0400

website;

<https://healthwatchbristol.co.uk/>

Twitter: @HWBristol



BUILDING EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE IN COMMUNITIES

