



VOLUNTEER TOOLKIT

Foreword

“Volunteering in cultural settings is stimulating, thought-provoking and confidence-building. Over the years I’ve met some of the most incredible people who have made attending an arts event or historic place so much more enjoyable because of their enthusiasm, interest and passion. Like lots of people I started my career as a volunteer and learnt so much. I still volunteer today when I’m not working. I know friends of all ages and backgrounds who enjoy being involved in culture in this way.

Torbay Culture Ambassadors is a programme designed as part of *Torbay’s Great Place Scheme* which will encourage volunteers to get involved in championing the value of Torbay’s cultural life, in a variety of places, and at different events. Do you want to help visitors and residents to get the most out of this inspiring place? Read on and join in!”

Martin Thomas
Executive Director
Torbay Culture

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1. Getting your organisation ready for volunteers

There are a few things to think about to get your organisation ready for hosting volunteers.

Host Agreement – We recommend that all organisations that are planning to host volunteers please read and sign up to our Host Agreement, available on the Torbay Culture website.

Volunteer Policy – It is a good idea to draw up a simple Volunteer Policy for your organisation. This means that everyone knows what to expect and what the procedures are should any issues arise. Typically, this policy should include the following:

- information about your organisation and your work
- volunteer roles
- information on expenses
- information on who will manage your volunteers and who they can contact with any questions and what the process would be if any issues came up
- links to your various policies that volunteers need to know about – for example, your safeguarding policies are just as relevant to volunteers as they are for your employees.

Further details on some of these aspects are provided in this toolkit.

Role Profile – Create simple role descriptions outlining expectations and any skills required. This can then be referred back to at any point and both sides are clear from the outset what is expected.

Legal Issues – Remember that your organisation's general policies such as Health & Safety, Safeguarding and Data Protection all relate to your volunteers as well as employees. Torbay Community Development Trust offers a useful course on volunteer management – please contact them for details (see link below).

Training – To make the most of your volunteers, and to make sure they feel happy in their placement, be ready to identify any training needs at the very beginning. Work out a plan to address them.

Management and Support – Be clear about who will manage volunteers on a day-to-day basis, what the process will be should there be any issues, how often reviews will take place, and such like. This should be included in your Volunteer Policy. For short-term volunteering, for example at events, you should still make sure that there is time for feedback. This can be done a few days later (unless it's urgent) but make sure you ask volunteers to keep a note of things that would have helped for next time.

2. Recruiting volunteers

The following steps will help you to recruit volunteers successfully.

1. Create **role profile** and consider whether a DBS¹ check is required at this point.
2. Consider creating an **applicant pack**, featuring information on your organisation, your work, what you are looking for and how people can apply. Are there deadlines or is the process ongoing? Who to contact for more details?
3. **Advertise**. Remember that Torbay Culture Ambassadors scheme can help with this, particularly for events and projects, by circulating details of your opportunity to all registered Culture Ambassadors.
4. **Meet with applicants**. This doesn't need to be a formal interview but a chat will allow you both to find out more about each other.
5. Successful applicants – **take up references** and begin DBS process if applicable.
6. Unsuccessful applicants – if they are not right for your organisation at present, or they are looking for something you cannot offer, can you provide any direction for them?
7. Get in touch with your successful applicants and arrange for them to come in for a simple **induction**.

3. Supporting your Volunteers

Once you've recruited your volunteers, there are a few things you can do to ensure they are supported to give their best. Consider:

Ongoing Training – If you organise training for your staff, can your volunteers attend too? Also take a look at what training is on offer for volunteers through Torbay Culture Ambassadors – if you are hosting Culture Ambassadors within your organisation, encourage them to participate in these and other opportunities. If there is generic skills training you'd like to see, and we don't already do it, let us know. It may be something that we can arrange, or point you in the direction of another provider.

Evaluation and Monitoring – Set in place regular reviews with your volunteers. Make sure they are happy. Do they need anything, and can you do anything to make volunteering easier for them? Are there any issues identified by staff that need addressing? Make sure they feel a part of the team.

Expenses – Ideally, cover travel and any other costs your volunteers incur during their volunteering (for example, for meals). If you can't do this, make it clear from the start and look to see if you can offer anything to help reduce their costs. Can you provide refreshments? If you have a café, could you offer them a discount?

¹ Disclosure & Barring Service

Parking permits? Refer to HMRC guidelines:

<https://www.gov.uk/volunteering/pay-and-expenses>

“Perks” or Incentives – These need not cost a lot but will help to say thank you to your volunteers and help them feel valued. Can you offer membership, invitations to private views, discounts on merchandise and ticketed events, early booking? Remember to stay within HMRC guidelines.

Paid Roles – Make sure your volunteers are aware if you are advertising any paid roles. They may be interested in applying!

Leaving – There will likely come a time when your volunteer needs to move on. No matter how long they have been with you, take this opportunity to find out how they have found volunteering and what improvements you can make.

Always remember – volunteering isn’t free. It requires an investment of time from staff involved and whilst this can occasionally be challenging, you will reap the rewards ten times over.

4. Checklist for short-term, event-based volunteers

- Have they been briefed fully?
- Do they know where to go for help?
- Have they got all the information, equipment and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) they might need?
- Do they know what to do about breaks?
- Have you got their emergency contact details?
- Make sure you get feedback!

Torbay Culture Ambassadors are a group of local people who are well-informed, positive supporters of Torbay's cultural life and are the 'go-to' volunteers for arts and heritage events and projects throughout Brixham, Paignton and Torquay. Torbay Culture supports people looking to volunteer in this way as well as the host organisations offering volunteering opportunities, ensuring a positive experience all round.

We do this by providing our Ambassadors with:

- an induction
- regular news of opportunities to volunteer
- invitations to special events
- opportunities to take part in focus groups or feedback groups
- training sessions
- opportunities to provide feedback on their experience as a volunteer
- offers and benefits to thank them for their support.

Organisations looking for some great volunteers who are also passionate advocates for Torbay's cultural scene can find out more at www.torbayculture.org/volunteering

The **Volunteer Centre**, Torbay Community Development Trust, provides information, training and support for all organisations in Torbay. This includes hosting a quarterly volunteer forum, helping organisations to find suitable volunteers, running training workshops, and participating in local and national campaigns relating to volunteering. In addition, there are a series of downloadable resources to help organisations with their volunteering journey. Visit www.torbaycdt.org.uk/core-work/volunteer-centre-torbay/ for more details.

The **South West Museum Development (SWMD) Programme** offers a range of advice, support and development opportunities to Accredited museums and those working towards Accreditation across the South West. Torbay subscribes to the programme which means all Torbay museums, and their volunteers, are able to access SWMD services. They also have free resources available to all at <https://southwestmuseums.org.uk/publications-resources/sustainable-volunteering-resources/>

SWMD has a Sustainable Volunteering Officer (SVO) who can provide advice and support on matters relating to your museum's volunteering programme. The team also works on a range of training opportunities and organises the South West Museum Volunteer Forum. This is a community of interest for developing and sharing best practice around volunteering. Find out more and contact the SVO via their webpage <https://southwestmuseums.org.uk/support/workforce-volunteering/>.

5. FAQs

What do I need to know about working with under 18s?

It is good practice to ensure that the parents of any volunteers under 18 are aware of exactly what their child will be doing, and gives their express consent for this. Always check that your insurance will cover volunteers under 18 and that you have an up-to-date risk assessment in place for them. Make sure your safeguarding policy and procedures include younger volunteers. DBS checks will be needed for anyone who comes into regular, unsupervised contact with volunteers under 18.

How are volunteers affected if they are on benefits?

Those in receipt of benefits are obliged to inform the relevant authorities if they are volunteering and, providing they only receive expenses such as travel, they will continue to receive any funding. It is not the organisation's responsibility to inform the authorities of volunteers who may be receiving benefits.

What do we do if we have problems with, or have had a complaint from, a volunteer?

Minor issues should be dealt with via an informal discussion with the volunteer. Any more serious allegations should follow your organisation's procedures.

Where can I advertise for volunteers in Torbay?

With us! We can help promote any opportunities you have to our Torbay Culture Ambassadors via our newsletters and social media channels. There is no charge for this. This is particularly suitable for event or project-based volunteering. In addition, we would suggest you contact the Volunteer Centre at Torbay Community Development Trust and list your opportunities online at <http://do-it.org>. Use your own social media and perhaps have a poster on display which visitors will see – you never know who might have some spare time.

Can foreign nationals volunteer with us?

Generally speaking, yes. We would suggest you ask them to check that their visa allows them to volunteer, if applicable.

We can't afford to provide training – can we get help with this?

Torbay Culture Ambassadors are able to access some free training via the programme. In addition, the Volunteer Centre run by Torbay Community Development Trust offers some excellent training and is also available for bespoke training (costs apply).

How do I get all our staff on board with a volunteer programme?

Bring them together and explain the benefits of volunteers in your organisation – staff can often worry that their roles will be replaced, however this should never be the intention. Volunteers are there to support the work you do. Don't separate your staff and volunteers – there should be one team.

What if my volunteers are only working on a one-off event?

Everything in this toolkit still applies. However, some things to bear in mind specifically for one off events are: make sure all staff and volunteers have a briefing on the day, keep emergency contact details for all, make sure they are fully kitted out and they know what to do in an emergency, make sure you are aware of any limits – can your volunteers stand for long periods of time and such like? There is a checklist on page 4 to help you remember these things.

6. Links to external organisations

National Council for Voluntary Organisations

www.ncvo.org.uk

Disclosure and Barring Service

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service

HMRC Guidelines on expenses and reward

www.gov.uk/volunteering/pay-and-expenses

Health and Safety Executive

www.hse.gov.uk

Do-it: Volunteering Organisation

www.do-it.org

Arts Council England

www.artscouncil.org.uk

Volunteer Centre Torbay

www.torbaycdt.org.uk/core-work/volunteer-centre-torbay/

South West Museums Development Programme

<https://southwestmuseums.org.uk/>