

**Why Should Organisations Involve Volunteers?**

**Are there ways in which volunteers could add value to the organisation? Some reasons to involve volunteers:**

* so that the community has a stake in what the VIO does
* as a resource to provide additional services
* to give a more personal touch in services to clients
* to build links to other groups /clients
* to assist in fundraising
* to become more cost effective (this is not the same as saving money!)
* to allow a quick reaction to changing needs or crisis situations
* to respond to a request for a specific service
* to provide something that professionals can’t

**Knowing why you want to involve volunteers and telling all of your stakeholders is also really helpful to:**

* determine the types of activities the organisation can create for volunteers
* clarify the role of volunteers and what they are contributing
* generate a better understanding among stakeholders such as staff, service users, and funders.

**Organisations who give out clear messages about how they value volunteers are the most successful recruiters.**

*“We welcome the involvement of volunteers in our organisation because of the unique qualities they bring”*

*“We welcome the involvement of volunteers because their input allows us to provide more and better services for our clients”*

*“Volunteers are part of the community we are trying to serve and are a vitally important part of our organisation.”*

*“We believe that everyone has a contribution to make and we welcome them to make it with us.”*

**Including a positive statement in volunteer agreements, handbooks and codes of practice on why you involve volunteers puts a value on the contribution of volunteers and helps people to feel more involved in the organisation.**

**To get people to volunteer with you, it helps to consider reasons why people might want to volunteer and also some of the benefits an individual might gain from volunteering with you.**

**But also consider the barriers – are you accessible, will existing staff resent volunteers?**

**The following ongoing costs and resource implications need to be considered before deciding to involve volunteers.**

* Is there someone to manage the volunteer?
* Is there a framework in place to involve volunteers?
* Recruitment, training and support take time
* Will selection procedures involve a CRB check?
* Does the VIO have the correct Health & Safety policies and insurance in place?
* Best practice would require volunteers’ expenses to be refunded – is this possible?