## Volunteer Recruitment and Support: Planning

### Volunteer Motivations

Before drawing up volunteer roles, or asking people to volunteer, it’s worth remembering why people volunteer in the first place. Perhaps reflect on your own journey - why did you start volunteering? Whilst everyone has different reasons, it’s easier to recruit a volunteer if you think about what they’ll get out of it and respond accordingly.

Some volunteers will be looking to “give back” to your venue, the community or to tennis more widely, whilst others may be looking to develop skills or experience, or for social reasons. Volunteering can help with confidence, social isolation, extending networks, promoting independence and opening doors for careers. Everyone is different and it’s important to understand these motivations because these are big marketing tools if you know them.

**The most common reasons people say they volunteer include:**

* Wanting to give back to tennis or their community
* Wanting to improve the lives of others (e.g. in their community, for kids)
* Wanting to improve their skills and experience
* Wanting to improve their confidence
* Wanting to build a better CV or improve career prospects
* Wanting to widen their social network

**The most common reasons that people stop volunteering include:**

* Not being made to feel welcome
* Not feeling valued or needed
* Not being sure what to do or how they’re contributing
* Not having their skills recognised
* A mismatch of tasks and skills
* Feeling overburdened

Whilst some broad generalisations can be made about motivations, be cautious in relying too heavily on assumptions. Try not to assume, for example, that a young person is volunteering to improve their CV, or that a retired just person wants to “give back”. Whilst this may often be the case, it’s important to recognise this can vary greatly and you will only find out by listening.

### The Motivations of Your Venue

Of course it’s important to know what the venue needs too. There’s little point recruiting a volunteer without knowing what you need them to do. Try to spend time thinking about what you’re trying to achieve by recruiting volunteers, such as:

* Achieving the club’s vision and following its [development plan](http://www.sportenglandclubmatters.com/club-planning/planning/club-development-plan/)
* Managing and growing the numbers of members
* Reducing the burden on current volunteers and improving their experience
* Involving more of the [local community](http://www.sportenglandclubmatters.com/club-people/members-participants/your-club-in-the-community/) and creating a sustainable pool of volunteers

Your Regional LTA Team can help you to put together an action plan.

### Volunteer roles

Once you’ve had a think about motivations, the next logical step is to think about the tasks and roles that need doing. The number of volunteer roles with tennis is vast and there are endless ways that people can get involved. Some suggested roles for the running of a tennis venue are included below and you will find Role Descriptions for these on the LTA website:

The exact make up will very much depend on the requirements/culture of the venue and with your people, so this is not a definitive list. However, the above list is a good place to start.

Ideally you’ll be able to identify “formal” and “informal” roles that vary in commitment and responsibility - both skilled and non-skilled.

The aim is to develop roles that feel meaningful and fulfilling and to strike a balance between a volunteer having enough to do, so that they have sense of achievement, and overstretching or overburdening them. Where a role feels too onerous, or where a volunteer has limited time, it can be good to encourage people to share roles, or to break-down tasks into manageable chunks.

### Volunteer Role Descriptions

If volunteers are clear about their role and responsibilities they are more likely to feel confident about what they should be doing. Ideally, all volunteers will be provided with a clear Role Description before starting in a role. This will of course depend on the nature of the role, and you will be mindful of creating additional paperwork, but it can be very helpful in defining volunteer roles and responsibilities.

A Role Description is similar to a Job Description but with key differences that ensure the role is suitable for a volunteer and avoids any reference to employment terminology – e.g. payment, job, contract or holiday. The Role Description templates on the LTA website can be used when writing up a new opportunity.

Role Descriptions need to be straightforward and sound interesting. They should set out the skills and experiences required for the role and the typical tasks and expectations. Neither should be considered too onerous. It’s important to think about:

* Putting the benefits to the volunteer ahead of the needs of the club – i.e. what’s in it for them? Make people feel excited
* Ensuring your language is volunteer friendly. Avoid making it sound like a job or a chore
* You could even insert images, pictures and quotes from volunteers to attract people

Contact the Volunteering Team for advice: [volunteer@lta.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@lta.org.uk)

**Role descriptions:**

* Allow you to show where the volunteer’s role fits in with the running of your venue or event
* Offer a list of tasks so the volunteer can compare these with their skills and expectations
* Describe the intended outcome of the role – i.e. how they make a difference

**It’s recommended that a role description includes**:

* Title of role
* Objective(s) of role
* A broad outline of tasks and activities
* Where the volunteer can obtain support
* Expectations of behaviour (if appropriate)
* Skills and knowledge needed

### Legal issues with volunteer role descriptions

It’s important not to imply a volunteer is *under contract* to perform specific tasks. If it appears that a volunteer is being employed by your venue, they may be eligible for full employment rights and you could find yourself unintentionally in breach of a number of employment regulations.

Whilst this is generally a low risk, as volunteers are unlikely to want to be ‘employees’, the impact can be significant so you are strongly advised to err on the side of caution. To manage the risk there are several things to consider:

* Avoid any reference to employment terminology – i.e. avoid words like: job, payment, employment, benefits, contracts
* Anything that could be seen as a payment for work, e.g. paying expenses, should be a genuine reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses rather than a fixed amount per week
* Training offered should be linked to the role that the person is carrying out, rather than a general perk or enticement to volunteer
* Phrasing the volunteer relationship in terms of expectation rather than obligation
* Ensure the opportunity is genuinely voluntary – i.e. the volunteer is choosing the activity
* Ensure that the volunteer is not *obliged* to commit to a set amount of time / hours per week and that there are no penalties for not meeting their commitment (e.g. repaying costs for training or being dismissed for not doing a certain number of hours)
* Do not promise a volunteer paid work as a result of a voluntary opportunity
* It’s great to reward people for volunteering but be careful that any such rewards are not seen as ‘consideration’ or payment

Contact the Volunteering Team for advice: [volunteer@lta.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@lta.org.uk)

### Volunteer Agreements

Alongside a Role Description, best practice would be to provide all volunteers with a Volunteer Agreement before starting in a role. Again, these documents are not legally binding and must not be seen as setting out a contract, but they do helpfully set out expectations from both parties.

It simply means that a volunteer agrees to the venue’s codes of conduct and expectations, with the venue agreeing to support them in return.

**A Volunteer Agreement will typically set out:**

* The arrangements for an induction and/or any training necessary for the role
* The arrangements for providing support to the volunteer and a named contact for support
* How volunteers are treated in line with Diversity and Inclusion best practice
* Any arrangements for reimbursing out-of-pocket expenses
* The insurance cover for the volunteers
* How volunteers are looked after under health and safety good practice

**A volunteer agreement will typically expect volunteers to:**

* Agree to a code of conduct (behaviours) relevant to the venue
* Follow the relevant policies and procedures of the venue – e.g. Diversity and Inclusion, Safeguarding, GDPR, health and safety and confidentiality
* Meet mutually agreed expectations around their volunteering role

Some venues feel a Volunteer Agreement is too “formal” for the culture of their venue. In that case, you may prefer to publish a set of behaviour guidelines that you distribute to all volunteers.

### Commitment and time limited roles

Understandably, a venue may have expectations on how much time they’d like someone to volunteer for. Whilst it’s helpful to set out these expectations, a balance ought to be struck with a good degree of flexibility built in. Subtle wording that says a role is “likely to take 3 to 4 hours a week” is arguably more appealing than “you *must* commit to 4 hours a week”.

It’s important that volunteers do not feel *obligated* by a commitment or that they will be penalised in any way for not matching expectations.

Some venues have found it helpful to set time limits on roles to ensure a healthy turn-over and share responsibility. By setting out a maximum “term” of role, it can encourage people to take over the reins, and for the venue to succession plan. You could, for example, decide to have a rule where no-one does a particular committee role for more than three years.

## Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Whilst “red-tape” is one of the biggest barriers to volunteer engagement, there are certain policies and procedures that are either legally required, or necessary to carry out the role. Having certain procedures mapped out for all can save you a lot of time and effort further down the line, and the LTA can offer advice.

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### Expenses

**In an ideal world, volunteers would not be “out of pocket” for volunteering but the reality of running a tennis club means that paying expenses isn’t always viable. Depending on the arrangements of your venue, it’s worth considering if volunteers can be paid “out of pocket” expenses for any cost directly incurred in their volunteering duties. The decision to pay expenses is entirely at the discretion of the tennis venue but should be clear and consistent either way.**

**If you do pay expenses, it’s very important that expenses are not paid at a flat rate (i.e. giving a set amount of money each time someone volunteers) to avoid any doubt over whether they are being paid. There have been a number of successful legal cases which have classed flat rate payments as income which could result in a volunteer being given employment status in the eyes of the law, leading to considerable financial penalties.**

**You can contact the Volunteering Team if you need advice:** [**volunteer@lta.org.uk**](mailto:volunteer@lta.org.uk)

### GDPR

A volunteer has the same rights under GDPR as an employee. This means you need to comply with rules on personal data that is stored on a computer or in paper files. Data may not be processed or shared without permission. Every venue has been provided with GDPR policies.

### ****Safeguarding****

Every registered venue is required to follow the Minimum Safeguarding Standards. Speak to the Safeguarding Team for further information: [safeguarding@lta.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@lta.org.uk).

### Volunteers under 18

Volunteering can be a positive experience for people under 18 years old and it’s a great way to engage younger people in the running of a healthy and vibrant club. However, it is important that clubs ensure their safety and wellbeing at all times so please consult safeguarding policies.

### Health and Safety

All venues have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of volunteers whilst volunteering – this includes duties inside and outside the club. Please refer to the LTA Health and Safety Policy for full details.

### Volunteers in receipt of benefits

There is no reason why a person in receipt of benefits should not be able to volunteer for your club. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) is happy for people in receipt of benefits to volunteer and, in most cases, there’s no limit to the amount of volunteering that someone on benefits can do, as long as they continue to meet the conditions of those benefits. This is partly in recognition of the positive impact that volunteering can have on people’s employability, wellbeing and skills development.

Volunteers in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance should be aware that Jobcentre Plus will need to be able to contact them whilst volunteering. Any volunteer in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance is required by DWP to attend an interview within 48 hours of being asked and is expected to start work within a week of being offered employment.

For Tax Credits, any expenses received whilst the person is carrying out their volunteering role will usually be disregarded when it comes to working out the volunteer’s income. However, those receiving an income-related benefit (like Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance, Council Tax Benefit or Housing Benefit), will need to retain receipts.

If you have any volunteers in receipt of benefits within your team, they can obtain a copy the “Volunteering and state benefits” booklet from the Volunteering England website: <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/component/gpb/statebenefits>.

### Diversity and Inclusion

It’s important to have a management committee that is reflective of your membership and of the local community. It is not always easy to encourage people to volunteer from every group, but by actively encouraging input you will be a more inclusive venue.

Volunteers do not have legal protection under the Equalities Act 2010. However, in line with good practice, equal opportunities into volunteering should be applied and active encouragement of a diverse culture. It’s important to discuss support needs with your volunteers and to accommodate any reasonable adjustments to their volunteering environment wherever possible.

If you feel your club lacks confidence or knowledge of equality, diversity and inclusion issues, you can access information and online training through the LTA Safeguarding page.

Ask new and existing volunteers if they have any individual needs that the club can help with i.e. can the club make reasonable adjustments to ensure a volunteer with disabilities has the best possible experience, or does the volunteer have any religious requirements i.e. prayer, storage of food, religious holidays or caring responsibilities.

### Taking on Volunteers from overseas

The general rule is that there should be no problem in accepting someone from overseas to volunteer, so long as they have the correct paperwork. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to ensure their paperwork is correct. The current status is as follows:

* **Within EU/EEA** - There are no restrictions on volunteering by people from the European Union (EU) and people from the European Economic Area (EEA)
* **Outside EU/EEA** – anyone outside the EU/EEA can volunteer provided that they have a visa to work or study in the UK, and as long as:
  + They are still undertaking the activity that is stated on the visa
  + The visa allows them to undertake “unpaid work” or volunteering
  + **Asylum seekers/refugees** – people who have refugee asylum seeker status (and their families) are able to volunteer

### Insurance

All volunteering activities within a registered venue are covered under the LTA’s Liability Insurance.

### Problem Solving

Please refer to the LTA Volunteering Problem Solving Policy should you encounter any of the following scenarios:

* a volunteer wishes to register a complaint about another volunteer or an LTA staff member
* a LTA staff member needs to manage a problem with a volunteer
* an appeal is necessary regarding the above
* a relationship with a volunteer needs to be ended after a complaint has been upheld

Problems can arise but where good support and supervision procedures are in place, problems may get solved without prolonging the difficulty. However, volunteers need to feel complaints are handled with sensitivity, that they receive a fair hearing and that procedures are followed.

### Whistleblowing

The LTA has an external provider to report and whistleblowing concerns. Each venue has been provided with details. Contact the LTA for further information.