## Attracting and Recruiting Volunteers

### Recruiting from within your club

Most volunteers are recruited from within the venue – from members, players and parents and their wider networks. Typical ways to do this include:

* **Word of mouth** – people often only volunteer when they are asked to. Word of mouth is the most successful form of recruitment with two thirds of volunteers recruited this way
* **Skills and Interests Survey** – conducting a survey of your members is a very useful way of recruiting volunteers (see below)
* **Posters / noticeboards** – members simply may not know how to volunteer or even that the club needs volunteers in the first place. Posters at the entrance and in the clubhouse, especially in high-footfall areas ( bar and changing rooms), can really help
* **Events** - approaching people at events – e.g. Mini Tennis parents - can be a good start as many volunteers sign up when their child begins playing
* **Tennis Leaders** - young people can offer great support, especially if they have been on a Tennis Leaders training course.
* **Emails** – email your members to let them know you’re looking for volunteers

**Skills and Interests Survey**

A simple survey of the skills and interests of your members can highlight potential volunteers, allowing you to appoint the right people to the right roles. The skills audit form on the LTA Website can be used by your venue as a template.

**Distribution**

You will likely want to contact all adult members, and the parents of juniors. You can use either a paper-based or electronic form but, either way, provide a clear deadline and chase for a response.

It can be effective to ask new members to complete the survey when they join.

**Roles**

Have a clear idea of what roles you need fulfilling before you start the survey and check out their role descriptions so you know what skills are needed. Alongside the survey, you could provide a list of roles available.

Try to ask members about their interests as well as their skills. Just because someone uses a skill in their paid role, they may not want to do so as a volunteer.

**Match-making**

Once you have all the forms in, you will need to match respondents with the roles or tasks that need doing. Once you’ve established this, you can then approach your members with an “ask”.

Research shows that there are many skills an individual will develop through volunteering, all of which are useful in other situations - whether that’s at work, at other volunteering opportunities or in day-to-day life. If you are able to clearly identify and communicate the skills a volunteer is developing, it will help them see the personal benefits they’re gaining from the opportunity and keep them engaged. And your club will benefit too!

### Recruiting from outside your club

Whilst the majority of volunteers will come from the existing membership, there are ways to attract volunteers from “outside”. Bringing in the wider community can bring in fresh perspectives, skills, experiences and make your volunteer pool more diverse. Some ways include:

* **The club website** – explicitly promoting volunteering on your website demonstrates the positive volunteering culture of the club, and is often overlooked as a recruitment tool
* **Posters** - advertising on local notice boards and through community networks and local media. You may want to put posters on community noticeboards, in Post Office windows, leisure centres, libraries, faith centres and local colleges.
* **Online** – online tools, such as those listed below, can help you recruit volunteers for free:
	+ Do-it / Join In
	+ Timebank and Reach – (skilled volunteers)
	+ Volunteering Matters
	+ vinspired
* **Social Media** - such as Facebook and Twitter. Venues are likely to be more successful by following local groups and community networks to widen their presence
* **Recruitment fairs** – consider advertising roles at local fairs alongside club promotion
* **Volunteer Centres** –local Volunteer Centres can help to recruit volunteers
* **Universities and colleges** – students are often looking for volunteering opportunities and most Universities will have a dedicated department who will advertise roles

If you recruit volunteers externally, think carefully about how you approach membership. Whilst you may want to *encourage* them to join, be careful membership isn’t *conditional* on them volunteering. Someone shouldn’t need to pay to volunteer, and a volunteer’s time is likely to be more valuable.

For those new to tennis, providing basic information including the layout of the club, rules and regulations and access to information about how to play tennis is important. It’s also important to follow-up enquiries in a timely manner because people will quickly lose interest.

## Selecting Volunteers

Whilst it’s tempting to accept whatever help you can get, it is important to ensure that you’re matching the right person into the right role, and that they have the skills needed.

Whilst you’ll be keen to avoid “red tape”, building in some sort of “check” on the suitability of the role is advisable. You might consider informally interviewing volunteers (which could be an informal chat over coffee). The Volunteering Team can offer suggested questions if needed.

### DBS Checks

As a minimum, some volunteer roles require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check – a check of all warnings, reprimands, cautions and convictions obtained from police records.

**The following roles are required to have a DBS check:**

* Welfare officer
* Competition organiser
* Junior tennis captain/contact
* Junior tennis captain
* Anyone helping drive juniors to competition venues
* Volunteer co-ordinators

However this is a non-exhaustive list and it is important to check which roles come into direct contact with children, young people and at-risk adults. The LTA wants to ensure these groups are safe from harm and have an enjoyable tennis experience.

You should consider for each role if a check is needed and you are legally required to ensure that everyone who works unsupervised with children has an enhanced criminal records check. The LTA Safeguarding Team are here to help and advice: safeguarding@lta.org.uk

### References

References enable you to check whether there were concerns by previous employees or volunteers. These are not mandatory and depend on the roles you are recruiting.

### Safeguarding

The LTA has provided every venue with Minimum Safeguarding Standards which set out the full requirements and expectations around safeguarding.

### Safeguarding Training

It is important that people working with, or responsible for, children and/or adults at risk have a basic safeguarding knowledge. The Safeguarding and Protection in Tennis training is provided by the LTA to help anyone involved in tennis volunteers, staff and coaches know how to recognise, respond to, refer and record safeguarding concerns and disclosures.

Welfare Officers are required to attend the training as set out in the Minimum Safeguarding Standards.

If you are a volunteer at your club, you can apply for an LTA Safeguarding and Protection in Tennis course refund by completing the Volunteer Declaration. Please email your relevant regional office with your name, position, volunteering role, affiliated venue, volunteer declaration and course.

### Being visible

The Welfare Officer is responsible for keeping children and adults at risk safe, so it is important that everyone at your venue knows who they are and how to speak to them if they have a concern. This will reassure your members that there is a process in place and that your venue actively promotes safe and inclusive tennis. A Welfare Officer poster should be displayed at your venue.

### If an issue arises

The LTA Safe and Inclusive Tennis team are there to help. You can contact them Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. There is also information in the What’s the Score toolkit. If someone is in immediate danger, call the police (999) then let the LTA know.

For advice out of hours, call NSPCC on 0808 800 5000 or ParentLine Scotland on 0800 028 2233.

### Trust

Some roles, such as Treasurer, Secretary and Welfare Officer, are entrusted with a lot of responsibility, especially having access to confidential information, venue accounts and paying bills. These roles should be allocated to those with relevant experience, where possible, and people who you have known or for whom you are able to obtain character references from other members. A good handover period with the incumbent volunteer will help ease the transition.

### “One off” events and GBTW

Sometimes it’s easier for people to sign up to a one-off opportunity, such as at a Great British Tennis Weekend (GBTW) than asking for a longer-term commitment.

If you make the volunteering experience enjoyable, and say thank you, your volunteers may be willing to help again. Have a face-to-face chat after the event about some manageable roles your venue needs support with to see if they are willing to help again.

There are various roles at a GBTW event – coaching, welcome desk, refreshment, selling your membership. If you are expecting lots of people you will need a number of people in these roles.

Young people can be a great help - assisting activities, helping the set-up and as event assistants. Parents are great advocates to newcomers – they can tell them about what their children love about playing tennis at the venue to encourage others to sign up.

Some clubs will set-up a rota and ask members to sign up for a one or two-hour slots. You might wish to approach them face-to-face. By asking for a small commitment, you’ll have more success