

# NORTH OF TYNE VOLUNTEERING AREA OF EXCELLENCE

## KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH VOLUNTEERS

**Strong, regular communication motivates volunteers and a lack of it is one of the main reasons they become disillusioned. Keeping your volunteers up to date on things going on inside your organisation is a vital aspect of keeping them engaged and ensuring they feel part of the team. Your organisation should consider how it plans to communicate with volunteers.**

**Most volunteer workforces are diverse, and volunteers will have varying communication preferences. Consider how you can make use of different modes of communication to ensure all volunteers feel valued and heard. Group supervision, peer support, staff meetings, and recognition events are mechanisms your organisation can introduce to enable engagement and provide opportunities for feedback.**

**Some people prefer more communication than others. By setting up a way to communicate with them all at the same time means they can dip in and out as much as they want. The best thing to do is ask people how they'd like you to communicate with them.**

**Remember to be clear and straightforward and to use everyday language that's easy to understand.**

### ALIGNMENT WITH THE HEALTH CHECK FOR VOLUNTEER-INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS

The Health Check for Volunteer-Involving Organisations considers how you provide a framework for providing feedback to volunteers.

### START COMMUNICATING EARLY

Try to keep in touch with your volunteers from when they first indicate an interest in volunteering. If it is taking some time to process an application to volunteer - for example, you may need to allow time to carry out a Data Barring Service (DBS) check - keep in touch with the potential volunteer to let them know that you are still interested in their help.

### DIFFERENT WAYS TO KEEP IN TOUCH

It is useful to have a variety of different means of communication that you can use to get in touch with your volunteers depending on the circumstances.

- Create a chat group on WhatsApp, Facebook messenger or through another social media channel. This is useful if you have urgent volunteer needs or to get a message out quickly. However, it won't work for everyone, so you'll need a way of contacting those who aren't comfortable with this.
- Add a volunteer-specific section to your website. This makes it easy for volunteers to keep up with what is going on with the organisation. And you can include things like new volunteer opportunities, upcoming meetings, and other information of interest to volunteers.
- Publish a Volunteer Newsletter. If you have sufficient volunteers, distributing a newsletter is a good way to let volunteers know about your organisation's recent accomplishments, current projects, and future goals. It also provides an excellent means to recognise the contributions of volunteers.

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- Use email – useful where there is a longer lead-in time or where you want a written record of what is being communicated to the volunteers. Again, not everyone will have access to emails.
- Use social gatherings – although this can be time-consuming, organising a get together of your volunteers can really help volunteer engagement. It will give staff and volunteers the chance to bond with each other and develop a sense of community and purpose. It will give them more confidence and provide opportunities to ask questions.
- Use the telephone – for example, if you want to thank your volunteers personally. However, if you need to have a serious discussion, an in-person meeting might work best.

**Remember that it is equally important for you to listen and act on the feedback of your volunteers as part of the keeping in touch process.**

