

5.7 RECOGNISING AND VALUING VOLUNTEERS

Recognising the contribution of volunteers is very important. It shows that you recognise their input and makes them feel valued and appreciated and when volunteers feel appreciated they are more likely to stay with your organisation. Try to recognise your volunteers in an individual way that does not make them feel uncomfortable. Not all volunteers will want to be in the newsletter or nominated for awards but some may enjoy public recognition of their contribution. Some volunteers appreciate something as simple as a thank you at the end of their day and feel this is adequate. You will need to decide what works best for your organisation and your volunteers depending on their circumstances and preferences.

Some ideas of how to recognise and value your volunteers are as follows:

- Provide References
- Say Thank you (verbally or with greeting cards)
- Provide regular reviews and support
- Keep them up to date with changes in the organisation
- Provide clothing, badges etc. so volunteers are instantly recognisable and appreciated
- Arrange fun social events
- Offer training and personal development
- Offer services such as complimentary sessions of your services for volunteers
- Nominate volunteers for local and national recognition awards
- Encourage volunteers to sign up to Duke of Edinburgh, Saltire or other national awards
- Be as flexible and accommodating as you can of individual needs
- Highlight your volunteers on notice boards, in newsletters and in publications (with their permission)
- Create a Volunteers tab on your website and share their stories and profiles (with their permission)
- Use social media such as Facebook and Twitter to tag and thank volunteers, add photos (with their permission)
- Provide certificates (Volunteers Week, in-house training etc.)
- Gifts for milestones such as long service or specific achievements
- Involve volunteers in decision making processes – give them a voice
- Offer and pay expenses
- Ask volunteers to your AGM or annual outings
- Mention the work of your volunteers in publicity materials including annual reports and press releases.
- Share feedback from service users or referral agencies on the impact their volunteering is making to others.

Sometimes asking your volunteers how best you can recognise their contribution is the most effective way of ensuring that take on board their preferences and suggestions. Remember to review this regularly to ensure new volunteers and ideas are incorporated into your plans.

In some circumstances volunteers can be very adamant that your organisation funds should be spent on your services and beneficiaries and not on them. This can be an opportunity to reiterate the importance and value of volunteers to your organisation and possibly suggest a form of recognition that does not impact your organisation in a monetary capacity.

Some more detailed guidance and example policies can be found in [our Document Library](#)