



# Including Youth Volunteers

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An introductory guide to organisations interested in including young people as volunteers.

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Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire  
May 2025

**VOLUNTARY**

**ACTION**

*North*

*Lanarkshire*

# Contents

- Contents .....1**
- Why Include Youth Volunteers?.....2**
- Using this Document.....3**
- The Role .....4**
  - Developing the Role.....4**
  - Creating a Volunteer Role Description .....5**
- Policies & Procedures .....5**
  - Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure .....5**
  - PVG Checks .....6**
  - Volunteer Policy.....6**
  - Code of Conduct (for adults working with young people).....7**
  - Volunteer Agreement (for youth volunteers) .....7**
  - Permission .....7**
  - Expenses .....8**
  - Insurance .....8**
  - Support.....9**
- Recruitment.....9**
  - Where to recruit .....9**
  - Useful tools for recruitment.....9**
  - Volunteer Awards .....10**
- Digital Appendix .....11**

## Why Include Youth Volunteers?

### **Benefits for Organisations:**

Young people can bring a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and commitment to a volunteering role and provide a new dimension to your work. They can:

- Bring knowledge, skills and fresh ideas.
- Give a voice to young people so that their perspective and experiences can shape future work.
- Help you to develop partnerships and networks with other organisations that support young people e.g. schools, youth groups and other voluntary organisations.
- Help promote your work to the wider community e.g. parents, residents and other communities.

### **Benefits to young volunteers:**

- Opportunities to build professional and personal skills.
- [Provides employment experience](#) in a young person's chosen occupation or career path.
- Giving them a break from the norm and a chance to try something completely different.
- Benefits to mental health and wellbeing.

### **Benefits to the community:**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)<sup>1</sup> states that Children and Young People have the right to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12).

- Including youth volunteers allows their voices to be heard and opinions to be recognised and reflected in their local community and services.
- Youth volunteers can build community capacity through the sharing of knowledge and skills.
- It opens the potential for intergenerational opportunities to promote understanding and compassion in communities.

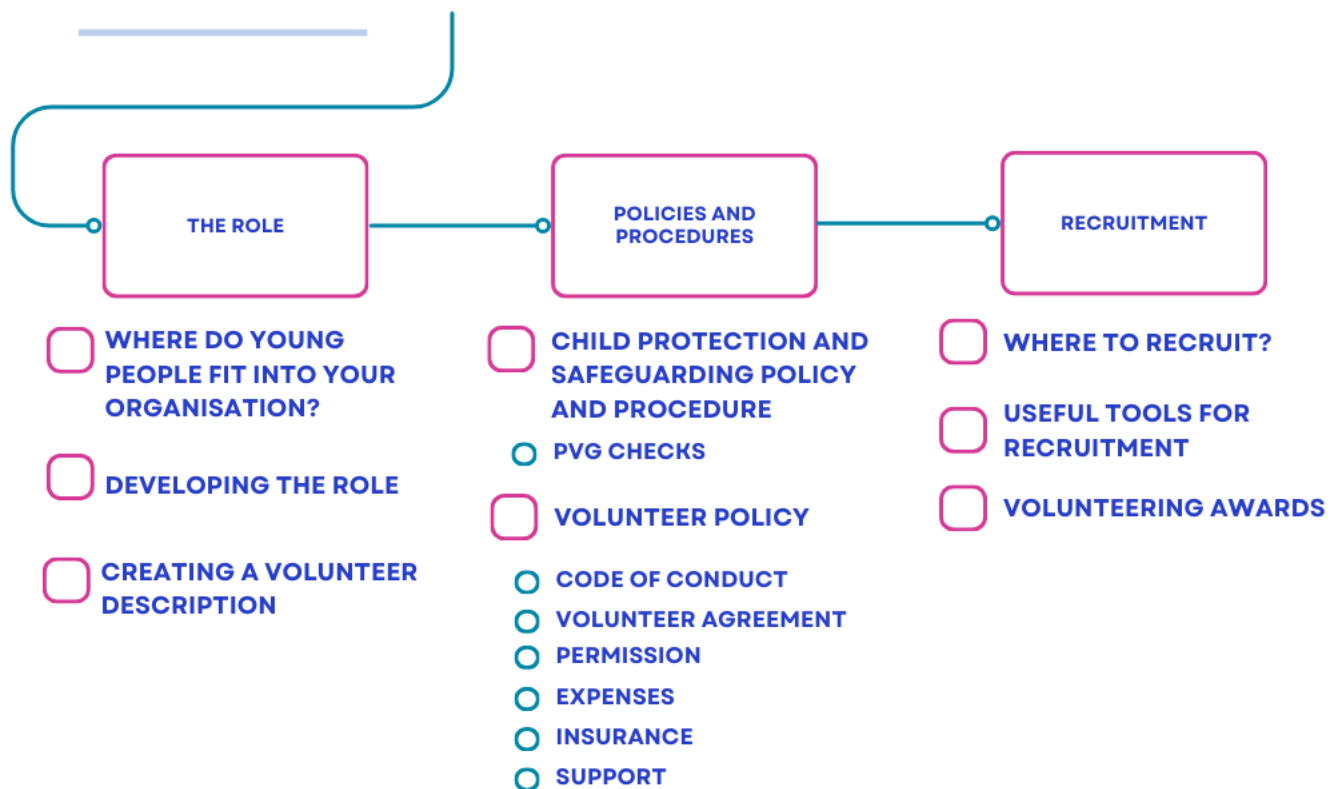
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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cypcs.org.uk/rights/uncrc/articles/>

## Using this Document

Outlined below are an overview of practical steps, intended to support organisations begin or build on their journey to youth volunteering. We have included a short description of each step and why it is important to include. There are clickable headings and scannable QR codes which link to our [digital appendix](#), which provides templates, example policies and links to further reading and support.

# Including Youth Volunteers



## The Role

Thinking about all the benefits to organisation and young people, it is important to think about what roles young people could take on within your organisation that would bring value to the work you are doing and brings a positive experience for young people.

### **Where do young people fit into my organisation?**

- Start with list of any tasks a volunteer could do to support your organisation. Think about delivery, administration, promotion and fundraising.
- Going through the list – is there anything which stands out as a good role for a young person. This may be something that fills a gap in your organisation, such as social media knowledge or peer mentoring.
- Be mindful of roles that would not be suitable most young people – i.e. occurs during school/college times.

### **Developing the Role**

- Identify who within your organisation is best placed and has capacity to support young volunteers.
- If you have young people in your organisation, it's a great time to consult them and gather their thoughts. They may have even better ideas of how they can be involved. (If not, you can always reach out to schools and colleges!) Think about what benefits volunteers would get from the role. This could include training, experience, learning new skills, fun, meeting new people etc.
- Decide what skills/experience would be helpful (or none required), training would be required and who would be best to support a volunteer in the role.
- Think about any risks associated with the role. Remember there may be extra mitigations needed for risks to young volunteers such as the height of equipment or additional training needed.

## Creating a Volunteer Role Description

Once you have a clear idea, write out a role for the volunteer. It should include:

- Clear outline of the tasks involved
- When the role would take place & how often
- Useful Skills/Experience
- Training
- Benefits for the volunteer



## Policies & Procedures

Having thought about where young people might be able to contribute to your organisation, the next step is to consider what structure might be needed to support young people. It may be that your organisation already had structures to support volunteers. This section is intended as a guide to **additional structures** and considerations when including youth volunteers.

### Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

- It is important to think about how your organisation will protect young people coming in to volunteer in your organisation.
- Developing a Safeguarding policy and procedure is essential when including young people and protecting them from harm.
- If you do not have one already, identify the appropriate person in your organisation who could act as the Safeguarding Lead.



For a comprehensive overview of Child Protection in North Lanarkshire you can use the below resource.

[Protecting Children and Young People: Guidance for the Voluntary and Independent Sectors](#)

## PVG Checks

Volunteer Scotland provides PVG checks for volunteers, **free of charge**. Go to <https://www.volunteerscotland.net/disclosure-services> to enrol your organisation.

- Current staff and volunteers working directly with youth volunteers may need to undertake PVG checks before an opportunity begins.
- Volunteers over the age of 16 may require a PVG check depending on their role (i.e. working directly with children/vulnerable adults). It is recommended that younger volunteers not undertake roles that would require a PVG check.



## Volunteer Policy

A Volunteer Policy sets out how you will recruit and support volunteers in your organisation. Your organisation may already have this policy in place, or you may be developing a new policy.



It is important to consider how youth volunteers will be addressed in your volunteer policy. Please see the next table for additions you might make to your volunteer policy to support Including Youth Volunteers.

### [Code of Conduct \(for adults working with young people\)](#)

- A Code of Conduct explains what employees and volunteers should and shouldn't do when they are working with young people.
- This helps ensure that everyone knows what's expected of them when working with young volunteers.



### [Volunteer Agreement \(for youth volunteers\)](#)

- It is useful to outline exactly what is expected of youth volunteers and what they can expect from you in terms of support and guidance.
- Keep it simple and to the point so that volunteers can easily refer to it!



### [Permission](#)

- For volunteers under 16 it is good practice to seek permission from a parent or guardian.
- For young people aged 16 and 17, you should decide whether parental consent is necessary depending on the activity and the young person's circumstances.



## Expenses

- Travel and food expenses can create a barrier to volunteering, especially for young volunteers.
- The [Volunteer Charter](#) states that volunteers should be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses.
- It is good practice to consider applying for a small pot of money for volunteer expenses. If the pot is not used, it could then be put toward an event or celebration for volunteers.



## Insurance

- All organisations working with volunteers should have an insurance policy that covers them.
- There are insurance providers to specialise<sup>2</sup> in the voluntary sector and can provide insurance at a small cost.
- Most insurance policies cover '*any volunteer helper*'.
- When you are working with volunteers below the age of 18, it is worth checking your Insurance Policy and with your provider to ensure they are also covered.



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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.keegan-pennykid.com/third-sector/>

## Support

- Ensuring you regularly check-in with volunteers is important for volunteers of any age. This can be in scheduled check-ins, at the end of a session, telephone check ins – it's good to have options so check what works best for your volunteer.
- Discuss ways your volunteer could feel supported while volunteering i.e. buddying up with an experienced volunteer, volunteering in a group.
- In addition, for it may be useful to have a list of specialised organisations you can signpost young people to – See QR Code.



## Recruitment

With roles and structures in place to include youth volunteers it's important to get the word out about your opportunity.

Where to recruit	Useful tools for recruitment
<p>You may wish to recruit widely or have targeted recruitment in an area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Recruitment websites</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">North Lanarkshire Volunteering</a>  <i>A free-to-use platform to promote volunteering opportunities and manage volunteers in North Lanarkshire.</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Social media</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Volunteer Scotland</a></p> <p><i>The national advertising space for volunteering opportunities.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Contact to schools and colleges</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Youth groups (i.e. Duke of Edinburgh groups)</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Canva</a></p> <p><i>Free and easy to use tool to create colourful and eye-catching adverts for social media</i></p> <p><a href="#">Volunteering Action Plan</a></p> <p><i>Loads of resources and templates (including digital templates) to support the recruitment of volunteers</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Taster sessions or events</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Word of Mouth</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">VolunteerNL</a></p> <p><i>an online platform hosted by North Lanarkshire Council to showcase current community volunteering opportunities across North Lanarkshire.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Posters around the community</li> </ul>	

## Volunteer Awards

[Saltire Awards](#) – For volunteers aged 12-25.

The Saltire Awards are a great way of celebrating, recognising and rewarding their commitment, contribution and achievements. There are four levels of award with the 'challenge' aimed at those getting started in volunteering.



[North Lanarkshire Challenge](#) – For volunteers ages 8 – 14.

There are different levels of award for different time commitments. It involves helping others, a physical activity, learning a skill and going on an adventure.



[Duke of Edinburgh Award](#) – For volunteers aged 14 - 24,

the DofE programme is completed at three progressive levels, Bronze, Silver or Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award. It involves volunteering, expedition and learning a skill.



[Youth Scotland Awards](#) – For volunteers aged 5+ (Hi5 Award), 10+ (Dynamic Youth Award) and 14+ (Youth Achievement Award).

These are based on the young person's interests and involve planning and completing a challenge which takes different amounts of time, depending on the level.



## Digital Appendix

For further resources, please use the QR link to visit our [digital appendix](#), which provides templates, example policies and links to further reading and support.



For further information and support  
please contact VANL by [email](#) or call 01236 748011.