



Volunteer Management Toolkit

A guide to managing volunteers
for Licensed Organisations

DofE.org

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Using the toolkit

This toolkit is an online resource, copies of which can be downloaded from the eDofE Resource Zone. It can then be downloaded to your computer and printed. Visit DofE.org/run/AVM for general information about the *Volunteer Management Toolkit*. As well as general volunteer management information, it contains a number of document templates that can be adapted for use by Licensed Organisations. 'Standalone' versions (without the annotations found in this toolkit) can be downloaded from DofE.org/resourcescentre – apply the Volunteer Management Toolkit filter.

The document templates can be adapted for use by LOs. Where <Deep red text> appears, this is for LOs to add their own details.

When adapting the templates, you can add the specific details that relate to your LO and the way you run DofE programmes. The guidance in this toolkit also suggests where to add further information about the DofE.

This toolkit should be used alongside the latest edition of *The Handbook for DofE Leaders*, which contains general information about the DofE, DofE programmes and timescales.

Please note: The toolkit is centred on adult volunteers who help to deliver any part of a DofE programme. It is not a resource aimed at DofE participants completing their Volunteering section.



Introduction

The *Volunteer Management Toolkit* gives Licensed Organisations (LOs) an overview of the 'good practice' guidance available on how to manage volunteers. It also includes a number of volunteer management 'document templates' that can be adapted for use by your LO.

Volunteers are a fantastic asset to LOs. They offer extra energy, skills, enthusiasm and ideas to support DofE participants across the country. Accommodating volunteers is achievable by all and has a huge number of positive advantages.

Some LOs already use volunteers to help run their DofE programmes/activities – and you may be thinking of starting to use them too. The DofE often receives queries from adults who wish to volunteer to help young people to achieve their DofE. This toolkit should help LOs respond positively and confidently to any volunteer enquiry. It should also give all LOs extra ideas on how to support the adult volunteers who help them to run the DofE.

This toolkit also considers the policies, procedures and documents that LOs should have in place in order to manage and support volunteers effectively.

Please note: This toolkit is intended to help LOs to develop their ideas about using volunteers. It offers 'good practice' volunteer management techniques for LOs to aim for. It is not intended to replace any policies you already have, or imply you need to change them. We hope that you will pick and choose any aspects that you might like to use to support the volunteers you have.

The templates are intended to be useful starting points for LOs and should not be considered complete documents.

The DofE accepts no responsibility for the use of these templates or guidance. LOs should make sure they are compatible with the law and your own internal procedures.

Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is intended to appeal to all LOs and to all 'Volunteer Managers'.

This is a term which is used throughout the toolkit. It refers to anyone who looks after a volunteer as part of their role and is responsible for them. This description could apply to a number of different roles – even if it's not a part of an official job title. Most people will be a Volunteer Manager as one part of a bigger role.

This toolkit can be used by anyone trying to co-ordinate a volunteer programme, especially DofE Managers, Co-ordinators or Leaders. Some Approved Activity Provider (AAP) Managers who wish to recruit volunteers for DofE activity may also find this toolkit helpful. For ease of reading, we have however referred to all organisations as a Licensed Organisation (LO).

We hope that everyone who reads this toolkit finds something of use, even if it is reassurance that your volunteer support is being offered along the lines we suggest.

New to volunteering

The toolkit is particularly suitable for those with little or no experience of managing volunteers, or for those who are establishing volunteering at an LO.

The combination of guidance and document templates are intended to increase knowledge of volunteering as quickly as possible.

Already using volunteers

Many LOs already use adult volunteers to help run their DofE programmes and have well established policies and procedures in place to support them.

Even if you are an experienced volunteer manager, and these practices aren't new to you, we hope this toolkit will still give you new ideas for how to support your volunteers.

Read on for help with recruiting new volunteers, working better with the ones you have and to understand the benefits of using volunteers.

If you're not sure where to begin using volunteers, this is the place to start.



1: Using volunteers within Licensed Organisations

This section lists some of the key issues to consider when using volunteers within your LO. It also looks at how to make the most of volunteers' skills, time and enthusiasm.

LOs are often reluctant to consider using volunteers to help run their DofE programmes. They feel that the time it takes to find and train a volunteer may outweigh the benefits of having them. Many don't know where to begin.

This Toolkit is intended to help show that volunteers save time overall and are a very good investment of resources and energy. It is likely that the more adults there are involved in helping young people to do their DofE, the more Awards are likely to be achieved in each LO.

We hope LOs will see an increase in Awards achieved as a good reason to make use of volunteers and that this toolkit helps them put this into action.

Who volunteers?

A volunteer is:

“Someone who gives freely of their time for the benefit of others, without expectation of payment (beyond the reimbursement of expenses).”

Volunteering is increasingly popular and is well regarded by employers. Adults of all ages now volunteer for a wide range of organisations.

Whilst people are keen to volunteer, the world in general is time-poor and keen volunteers may be juggling multiple responsibilities. Volunteers are not necessarily willing or able to offer open ended commitments. Remembering this helps to set expectations on both sides.

Volunteers – or staff members?

LOs often have adults helping to deliver the DofE. It may not be immediately apparent if they are doing so as a volunteer or as staff.

LO employees (e.g. teachers) may in some cases be expected to 'pick up' the DofE on top of everything else they do, without any extra time or resources.

Staff may deliver the DofE in their spare time as a personal choice. Other variations exist. This toolkit looks at good practice for volunteers – those proactively giving their time. Whilst this will generally not be people in connected jobs, the good practice management information may still be relevant.



Why do people volunteer?

There are many good reasons why people give their time freely: to give something back, to learn new skills, to have fun. Every volunteer will have a personal, possibly emotional, reason for wishing to volunteer.

Whatever their specific motivations may be, LOs can make effective use of their individual strengths and interests.

Some key motivations for volunteering can be broadly identified for different age groups. Younger volunteers (e.g. those in their 20s) often view volunteering as a way to add to their skills and CV.

Those in their 30s and 40s are often the most common group to give their time, many of whom are motivated to help their communities and their children. Older people also volunteer in large numbers, particularly those who are retired and wish to remain active and using their skills.

Finding out why each person wishes to volunteer is a good way to make sure they are properly managed.

How will volunteers help to deliver the DofE?

Volunteers undertake a number of different roles to help make sure young people achieve their

DofE. Some adults volunteer for the DofE directly. For example, Network Assessors (Expedition Assessors who belong to an Assessor Network) are managed by the DofE.

Other adults volunteer for individual LOs, helping them to deliver the DofE to young people within their organisation. This might be as a Leader, an Award Verifier or as part of the expedition support team. Volunteers can help you in all kinds of ways, depending on your needs.

What do people expect from volunteering?

This depends on the person but some common expectations are: to have fun, to support a good cause, to gain skills and experience, to support the DofE.

A key factor to bear in mind is that volunteers must be treated differently to staff. They are acting out of their own goodwill and will expect to be treated as a volunteer, not as a paid employee.

They will expect to be afforded respect and given the support needed to be a successful volunteer with your organisation.

The next question to ask is: *What volunteer support does our LO need?* See the next section on volunteer recruitment to help work out how volunteers can best be used within your LO.

2: Volunteer recruitment

This section looks first at working out what volunteer support you need. Recruitment is one of the most common challenges stated for not using volunteers – so we look at how to find new adult help.

It also considers what to do once you've found someone who is interested in volunteering – but has not yet said 'yes'.

Getting started with recruitment

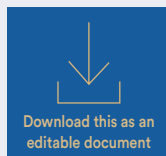
Completing a 'Volunteer audit' is an opportunity to think about your LO's current position and if recruiting extra adult volunteers will work.

Gaining extra volunteers can be an effort but well worth it – however, you should make sure you need them and can use them first.

Volunteers will expect you to be able to support

them, if you've gone to the effort of finding them. Remember to check eDofE in advance to find out information about the number of participants and adults you have.

If you already use volunteers, the audit can be used to work out where the skills gaps are in your current leadership team. This may show, for example, that you need Leaders with certain skills, or who are available at specific times.



Volunteer audit

This could be completed by a group of key stakeholders as a discussion exercise, or individually (e.g. by the Volunteer Manager, Co-ordinator or DofE Leader).

Consider the following:

<Insert LO Name>

- How would our organisation benefit from extra adult volunteers helping to run the DofE?

- Do we have someone who could manage the volunteers we recruit?

- What would someone gain from volunteering with us?

- Do we have the time and resources to support new volunteers?

Use of volunteers

- Do we have enough adults to run:

- Regular meetings for DofE participants? _____

- Expedition training? _____

- Expeditions? _____

- What skills are we missing (e.g. catering skills)?

- What 'full' roles (e.g. DofE Leader) do we need to recruit to?

- What smaller tasks do we need doing?

Before starting to advertise, use the audit and other information to get a central list of all the roles and tasks you need doing. Make this available to others who may be able to suggest potential volunteers. Keeping the list up-to-date is important to make sure you stay aware of your vacancies. It also means that when you get an expression of interest, you can quickly decide on the most useful potential role. This saves any delay in responding to the potential volunteer.

Volunteer opportunities

Once you have done the audit, you can decide which roles/tasks to try and find people for. Visualise the kind of person who might volunteer and what they would be looking for in a volunteering opportunity.

- **Regular:** is this a role that will benefit from a sustained commitment and require training?
- **Specialist:** is this a role that only people with certain skills can do?
- **One-off:** is this an occasional, seasonal, role or one that only needs to happen once?

The answer to each should influence how you approach finding someone. If you know a specialist in the area you need, you may wish to talk to them directly.

Further voluntary role examples

Here are some extra ideas for how to use volunteers within your LO. These demonstrate that not all roles demand high levels of commitment and may uncover the volunteer you need.

- **eDofE helper** – a ‘buddy’ role, assisting participants to upload information to their eDofE account (see ‘[Useful Links](#)’ on page 37).
- **General DofE helper** – helping with meetings or one-off events and supporting the other members of the leadership team.
- **Equipment volunteer** – in charge of the kit available to the group/centre and making sure it is maintained and replaced where necessary.
- **Assistant Leader** – a key part of the leadership team, supporting the Leader and other adults.
- **Expedition support** – assisting with parts of the training or build-up to the expedition.

Flexibility

With all volunteers, making their involvement as flexible as possible is a good approach to aim for. If someone is only available for some of the time you need them, ‘role sharing’ with another volunteer could make good use of both of them. It doesn’t mean changing established procedures to fit in with a volunteer, but making sensible adjustments where possible to allow them to help you.

When thinking about flexibility, remember that some volunteers may have physical or mental health needs that should be accommodated in their voluntary role. Seek specialist advice where needed. In all cases be as supportive, welcoming and flexible as you can be.

Recruiting volunteers

This is often seen as the biggest barrier to making use of volunteers. Here are some useful tips:

- **People like to be asked to volunteer** – but suggest a role that suits them.
- **Supporters.** You have supporters within the ‘DofE circle’ (i.e. those who are connected to the DofE in some way) – generate a list of names of former participants, Leaders, family members who may be suitable and then ask them. The most likely people to volunteer in the first instance are people you already know (or have some connection to the DofE).
- **Find a suitable role.** As tempting as it may be to put a volunteer straight into any role they apply for; if they are unsuitable, they won’t last and you’ll need to recruit again soon.
- **Ongoing.** Being on the lookout for people to help out is a constant process. You can never be too sure as to when one of your current volunteers will be unavailable.
- **Spread the load.** Make sure that as many of your team as possible within your LO are able to help with recruitment.
- **Think long term.** Someone may not be immediately ready to be the next DofE Leader, but they can be developed if they are offered suitable support, training and information.
- **Be flexible.** Adults have busy lives and other commitments. Where you can be flexible, try to be – e.g. with their role (splitting it into a ‘role share’ if necessary) or on the time they are involved.

- **Run ‘taster sessions’.** Volunteers may not be able to visualise how a DofE meeting or event might work. Hold a simple, fun and welcoming ‘open event’, with young people there, to give them a better idea. Involve them in the event gradually but make sure they are given something suitable and interesting to do. It’s a good opportunity to get to know them better and see what their interests are.

Recruitment methods

There are many different ways to find volunteers but no one single right way, it will vary for each situation. Pick from the following selection the methods that most suit your organisation.

‘Internal’ recruitment:

Looking within your organisation should normally be the first step. Finding someone with a positive connection to the LO or the DofE is more likely to be successful than finding someone completely new:

- **Former participants** Award holders are likely to be natural DofE supporters, well versed in the DofE and with many reasons to wish to help the DofE. They are likely to have positive memories of doing their DofE and are likely to be open to revisiting some of the experiences. Finding a list of former participants may also prompt recollections of other potentially interested people. Even those who started their DofE but did not finish it (which may have been for any number of reasons) may be interested in supporting their former group/centre.
- **DofE Young Leaders** Encourage former participants to become part of the leadership team, particularly after they have finished their DofE programme (especially Gold). Training is available – see [DofE.org/training](https://www.dofe.org/training). Young Leaders can be a really active part of the volunteer team, whilst gaining the experience to undertake a DofE Leader or other volunteer role.
- **Volunteering Awards** Volunteers under 25 years can aim to complete a number of Youth Volunteer Awards, which are excellent recognition for their volunteer efforts. See page 37 for a suggested list of Awards.
- **Name generation** One way to find interested people is to pull together a list of all the people who may be willing to assist. This could be former participants (as above), parents, and former Leaders.

‘Targeting’ individuals from the local community can also be productive. Look for willing volunteers– e.g. school governors, Scout/Guide Leaders etc.

Asking someone to volunteer - top tips:

Although this can be used for ‘external’ volunteers, it is good to have in mind when approaching people you already have a connection with.

Adopt a personal approach:

- Choose a role that is entirely suitable for them.
- Flattery is very persuasive.
- Be positive and explain how much they will enjoy and benefit from the role.
- Be very clear about the role and what it entails.
- Don’t exaggerate or give false expectation about what the role will be like – it will quickly be apparent if the situation is not as presented.

‘External’ recruitment

Looking for volunteers outside your organisation (and those new to the DofE) both increases your pool of potential volunteers but will mean you have to ‘sell’ the opportunity more.

The following suggestions are all ways to get new people into voluntary roles – there is no one correct way and choosing the right options for your LO is important.

Events

Running either an individual event or attending one arranged elsewhere (e.g. university freshers’ fairs, church fetes) is a way to meet a lot of people at once. This approach requires having people who are willing to enthusiastically approach people and try to convince them to sign up.

This is not for everyone and some will undoubtedly find it out of their comfort zone. See overleaf for a sample sign-up sheet to record the names of potential volunteers at events.

Choosing an eye-catching activity that shows the DofE at its best is most likely to make an impression. Expect to talk to a lot of people and for many of them to not be interested.

Sample volunteer sign-up sheet



Event name (if applicable): _____ Date: ____/____/____

Name: _____

Email: _____ Tel: _____

Address: _____

_____ Post code: _____

Role/interest: _____

Name: _____

Email: _____ Tel: _____

Address: _____

_____ Post code: _____

Role/interest: _____

Name: _____

Email: _____ Tel: _____

Address: _____

_____ Post code: _____

Role/interest: _____

Name: _____

Email: _____ Tel: _____

Address: _____

_____ Post code: _____

Role/interest: _____

Consider adding extra fields, e.g. availability, skills etc., but don't be tempted to ask for too much information at once.

Printed resources can appear in many forms and are a way to give information that can be taken away to digest. Many of the templates in this toolkit could be suitable, particularly the role descriptions.

Getting people to register their interest is one thing, giving them information to take away to find out more is even better.

Leaflets are a good method to make an impression about the type of activity as well as giving information about the role.

DofE volunteer leaflets can be found on DofE Essentials (via eDofE) and you can personalise these leaflets, posters and banners through the DofE Brand Centre at DofE.org/brandcentre.

For both, having someone to contact and ideally an event to attend would be ideal. Printed resources can be expensive and thought needs to be put into where to put them. Putting up 25,000 posters would be a huge effort and expense, so target the particular situation/event/people that you need to.

Online advertising is increasingly popular and a large number of people will actively search for opportunities online.

Having your own website or page on another site is a very useful tool to refer potential volunteers to. You can use them to put up information about the role and your LO.

do-it.org.uk

Do-It is the national volunteering database, with over one million voluntary opportunities advertised. DofE Managers can apply for a DofE sub-account allowing them to add their own adverts to Do-It.

There are many other options for online volunteer advertising that can be explored. Most are limited to a geographical area or a certain type of volunteering.

See the 'Helpful Links' section for information on websites that specialise in other UK areas.

Tips for advertising:

- Use the DofE logo. You can download copies of the logo in the range of formats, and order a bespoke one for your LO from DofE.org/logo.
- Use straightforward terminology. Is what you've written likely to be understood by someone completely new to the DofE?

- Expensive media campaigns are generally not very successful at generating enquiries at a local level. It is far better to put the time, money and effort into more locally focussed efforts.
- Always be positive. Negative adverts (e.g. 'DofE group to close unless you step forward now') are very unlikely to elicit a good outcome in the long term. You want people to respond enthusiastically to a positive opportunity – that way they are far more likely to stay involved.

Dealing with enquiries:

1. **Respond quickly and enthusiastically.** Even if you need further time to find details, start to make the connection quickly. Let them know if you are looking for other information for them.
2. **Find out more about the potential volunteer.** Why do they want to volunteer, where are they based etc?
3. **Try to understand what role might be suitable.** Arranging to meet them at this point might be sensible.
4. **Give them further information and talk it through.**
5. **Go through the appointment and application procedures as soon as possible.** Keep them informed about any delays to make sure they don't lose heart.

Remember: Not responding to an enquiry must be avoided. It is likely to mean that the volunteer will not put themselves forward to you again.

If the Volunteer Manager is going to be unavailable for any length of time, having someone else to respond (even with a holding response) is good practice.

Not everyone will be suitable for your role. As tempting as it might be, don't try and put every willing volunteer into a vacant role.

If they are not suitable, they won't be happy and you will end up with more work to support (and probably replace) them.

Role descriptions

Role descriptions for all voluntary roles are available in the eDofE Resource Zone. Use the following template to write DofE role descriptions that are specific to your LO.

Volunteer role description template

<Insert LO Name> and <LO logo>

Role title: (use a standard DofE title or create one that fits with your LO)

What is the DofE? (give a very brief overview - see DofE.org for sample wording)

What does our organisation do? (eg: We look after young people aged 14-19 in XXX)

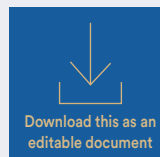
Time commitment: (eg: 2 hours per week, plus odd weekend activities)

Skills and qualities needed: (eg: experience of working with young people)

What volunteers will gain: (eg: developing their own leadership skills)

Why we want you: (eg: more young people want to join and your help can make it happen)

For further information, contact: (insert contact details for your volunteer manager)



Basic role profiles

You can adapt and use all or part of this document within your LO.

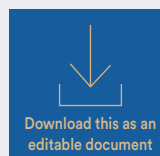
DofE voluntary role profiles

Here are some of the main roles you can do to help us run the DofE at <Insert LO Name>.

- **DofE Leaders** are responsible for running a DofE group and leading, guiding, inspiring and encouraging young people. They help participants with choosing their programme activities and approve their progress and pictures in eDofE.
- **DofE Managers** are responsible for the day to day delivery of the DofE within an LO.
- **DofE Co-ordinators** set up and manage the DofE in a centre, supporting the Leaders and groups.
- **DofE Assessors** check on a young person's progress and agree the completion of a section of their programme. In the Expedition section, qualifying expeditions must be assessed by a qualified (DofE accredited) Assessor, who checks the 20 conditions of the expedition are met.
- **DofE Supervisors** help participants set their goals and regularly meet with them to check on their progress, address any potential issues and adjust goals if required.
- **Award Verifiers** grant final approval to the Awards achieved by participants. They are independent of the delivery of DofE programmes to young people and are an independent quality check.
- **Other Volunteers/helpers:** there are numerous other ways to involve volunteers – supporting a Leader to run the group, helping with administration, giving specific training to participants. For those with the right experience, volunteering as part of the expedition support team might be suitable.

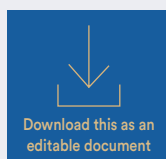
Please contact <Insert contact details> for further information or to discuss the roles.

Thank you very much for your interest.



Example of an expanded volunteer advert

This kind of longer advert would be good for using on your website, or to give to someone when they enquire about a role. Adapt this template and example text for your own LO.



Volunteer Expedition Assessor

<insert LO Name> and <LO logo>

What is the DofE?

Explain the background

Every year, we help hundreds of young people (aged 14-25) to complete their Bronze, Silver or Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award. As part of their programme, young people will undertake the Expedition section. In teams, they will plan an adventurous journey with a common aim, which will culminate in them doing an unaccompanied, self-reliant expedition. Expeditions can take place in a variety of environments and using different modes of travel (e.g. walking, cycling or canoeing). They will complete expedition training and then do both a practice and an assessed expedition.

What will I be doing?

Explain the role

Expedition Assessors work with the participants and the Expedition Supervisor to help the team have a successful expedition. They check that the expedition meets the 20 conditions – which are a list of criteria that the expedition needs to meet in order to be considered valid.

Expedition Assessors will work with the team before the expedition, reviewing their expedition plan and completing a pre-expedition check. During expeditions, they meet the team several times en route, including at the conclusion. They also complete an Assessor's report, giving their view on the performance of individuals. They may on occasion provide the participants with local area information.

Where and when will I be volunteering?

Give an indication of the time commitment

We have a number of centres throughout the <insert area name> area. Our expeditions and practice sessions run from March to October, so the main volunteering opportunities are during that time. Expeditions happen several times a year, in locations locally and further afield, and this is the ideal role to get involved with the DofE in a flexible way.

What skills and qualifications do I need?

Explain skills needed in order to enjoy the role

To get the most out of this role, you'll probably have worked with young people before and have a love of the great outdoors and walking. You'll be comfortable with the skills needed to complete expeditions (e.g. navigation, map reading, using a compass), be able to cope with changing and challenging situations. Formal qualifications in outdoor leadership (e.g. BEL or ML awards) or other skills (e.g. canoeing) are welcomed but not essential <adapt to fit your LO policy>.

DofE Expedition Assessors will need to complete a DofE training course (including some pre-course learning) and complete a qualifying Supported Assessment, where an experienced Assessor will accompany you to check you are assessing correctly.

What's in it for me?

Talk about the benefits of doing the role

This role puts you in a real position to support young people in developing their skills in expedition activities. They are an invaluable part of the quality checking process of the expeditions. If you're thinking of a career in teaching, youth work or outdoor education, or wish to further your experience as an expedition expert, this role will give you invaluable experience.

I'm interested in finding out more – what are the next steps?

Have clear contact details and a plan for responding to enquiries

Speak to <insert name>, the DofE Manager, about doing this role and they will talk you through how to get involved. They will tell you much more about the role and will discuss any support we can give you. Thank you very much for your interest in this voluntary opportunity.

- Contact <Insert name> on <Insert email address> or call <Insert contact number>.
- For further information on the DofE visit [DofE.org](https://www.dofe.org) and on the DofE in <Insert LO name> or visit <Insert web address>.

3: Policies and procedures

– making sure LOs are set up to support volunteers

This section looks at the policies and procedures you should develop to support your volunteers. The following are some of the main administrative procedures an organisation should have. Ideally you should decide which ones to adopt before starting to look for or recruit any volunteers. All policies and procedures must be compliant with the DofE's Licences.

Organisational policies

Volunteers are not staff and should be treated with different considerations. However, your organisation does have a duty of care towards them. Creating some simple policies and procedures shows your LO has thought about protecting the volunteers in your care.

Make sure that the documents used here are compatible with your own rules and procedures. Many of the administrative issues discussed here are well known and also applicable to staff.

Your LO is likely to have a procedure that covers these issues already (even if relating to staff), probably with HR. Considering how the following relate to your volunteers is the best way to avoid issues.

It is an example of good volunteer management practice to cover as many of these as possible.

Volunteer recruitment and management will always involve a certain amount of administration. However, you should always make sure that you only ask volunteers for information that you will actually need. Excessive administration is likely to dampen the enthusiasm of many keen volunteers.

Volunteer policy

The DofE has its own volunteer policy, find it at [DofE.org/run/AVM](https://www.dofe.org/run/AVM) and below. It shows current and potential DofE volunteers our views on volunteering and what we hope and expect to achieve from working with volunteers. Most volunteers want to know that they are going to volunteer with an organisation that values them.





DofE Volunteer Policy

– for DofE volunteers

Please note: This document is aimed at our adult volunteers and does not cover DofE participants completing their Volunteering section.

Adult volunteers are a central part of the delivery of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, offering their time and skills in many different ways. They are an essential aspect of the DofE's efforts to encourage more young people to achieve their Awards.

Show volunteers they are valued.

This policy ensures that we show our appreciation of their hard work and the roles they perform. It also highlights our firm intention to ensure that everyone has a positive and rewarding volunteering experience with the DofE.

Highlight the audience – who the policy covers

Volunteer audience:

This policy covers those who volunteer directly for the DofE.

DofE Volunteers are:

1. Network Assessors (belonging to Expedition Assessor Networks) and Assessor Network Co-ordinators (where undertaking this role in an unpaid, voluntary capacity);
2. Trustees and Advisory Panel members of the DofE;
3. Those volunteering within and on behalf of DofE Offices (e.g. office-based voluntary placements, Regional volunteers, Ambassadors, VIP hosts at Gold Award Presentations).

Note - Volunteering with one of our Licensed Organisations (LOs):

This policy does not cover those who volunteer for one of the organisations we license to deliver the DofE. If also volunteering for one of our LOs, you should follow any volunteering policy they have. However, we would encourage all organisations licensed by the DofE to treat volunteers within the spirit of this policy.

Volunteers for the DofE should expect:

Outline the kind of volunteering experience they will have.

- to be warmly welcomed and to have gratitude shown to them for their efforts;
- to receive the resources, training and support necessary for them to undertake their role;
- a paid member of staff or senior volunteer to act as volunteer co-ordinator, who will provide direct information and guidance;
- clarity around issues such as insurance, safeguarding and disclosures;
- a voluntary role that is suitable for them, clearly defined and flexible.

The DofE expects and hopes that volunteers will:

Make clear the expectations your LO has of the volunteer.

- enjoy, benefit from and gain personal development whilst volunteering for the DofE;
- feel valued for their contribution to the DofE;
- act as ambassadors for the DofE, upholding the reputation of the DofE;
- adhere to the confidentiality policy for volunteers of the DofE;
- aim to fulfil the functions of their role;
- help us to inspire, support and develop young people doing their DofE;
- be reliable and keep us informed if they have problems or cannot attend; and
- provide us with constructive feedback to help us improve our volunteer experience.

The hopes and expectations listed above are not intended to imply any form of contract. This policy is aspirational and will be revised annually.

LOs should have a volunteer policy too, so they can show new volunteers their views on volunteering. Some organisations express their intentions through a 'Volunteer Charter'.

Organisations have a variety of approaches about what to include in a volunteer policy. Some will use it as an opportunity to lay out the way a volunteer would be treated all the way through their time in a role.

Others will split the policy out from the broader information about volunteering (as the DofE does). This template is intended to help make your own volunteer policy and follows this approach. Either way, keeping it simple is best.

The other areas of volunteer policy are included in this toolkit. A blank volunteer policy template is below:

<Insert LO name> Volunteer Policy

What volunteers mean to our organisation

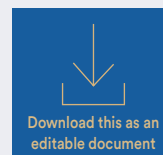
What our volunteers do for our organisation

E.g. protecting our image.

What volunteers for <Insert LO Name> should expect

What we hope and expect our volunteers will do for us

E.g. being a good ambassador.



Volunteer Handbook

Whilst a volunteer policy is normally a relatively simple declaration of an organisation's approach to involving volunteers, LOs may wish to also create a specific 'Volunteer Handbook'. A Volunteer Handbook is usually a substantial reference guide for volunteers; it will often be used as a recruitment tool and given out to volunteers ahead of them beginning their voluntary involvement

We recommend that your Handbook should be different from the *Induction Pack* (see page 27), which will normally be given out when a volunteer has started in their role, even if they share some content. A Handbook can be personalised to become a 'volunteer record book', saving information about training, volunteer role information and anything else relevant to the LO and volunteer.

Individual LOs should decide whether to create a handbook, induction pack or both,

depending on their circumstances.

Larger LOs may usefully create a standard Handbook that can be adapted for each individual centre. A Handbook will normally be more suitable for bigger organisations, as it is a good way to introduce and explain a more complex situation.

Use the opportunity to make sure volunteers are clear about the policies, procedures and set up of the larger organisation, but also have information about the set up at their specific centre.

When you start to look for suitable content, much of the information in this toolkit could be included. The following template has some basic suggestions for how you might structure and create a Volunteer Handbook for your LO.

Treat this as a starting point and consider including some of the Induction information in Chapter 5, as well as the rest of the guidance in this toolkit.



Volunteer Handbook

– suggested content



Welcome message/foreword

(From a key volunteer, staff member or supporter.)

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

(Information about the DofE and the set up within your LO.)

Volunteering with <Insert LO Name>

- Key organisational information (e.g. LO staff and volunteer numbers).
- Voluntary roles available (include volunteer locations).
- How we value volunteers (e.g. Volunteer policy, volunteer charter).
- Our hopes and expectations (e.g. behaviour, availability).

Your voluntary role

- Role description (with examples of existing volunteers).
- Support available to you (e.g. volunteer supervisor/manager details, review and support meetings).
- Application process (i.e. how to get involved once interested).

Induction information

(Overview of key information, ideally make a separate induction pack.)

- Key policies (e.g. Safeguarding, expenses, data protection).
- Practical information (e.g. forthcoming events, dress code).
- Communication with volunteers (e.g. regular email updates).

Record of volunteering

- Training needs/forthcoming courses (i.e. include any mandatory training)
- Training Log (e.g. recording personal development, Expedition Assessor accreditation details)
- Record of key events and notable achievements

Further information/links/notes

(e.g. key contacts, websites, useful resources)

Appendix and forms

(Documents to refer to throughout your volunteering e.g. expenses.)

Conclusion and thanks

(From whoever did the welcome message.)



Insurance

As guidance, we offer the following general information but recommend that your LO considers how insurance affects all volunteers they use. DofE licences are clear that an LO's insurance needs to cover all adults and participants involved in DofE activity.

Staff policies are not likely to automatically cover volunteers. Volunteers will expect some form of insurance that covers them for whatever activity they are doing. Your organisation will want insurance to protect itself from any issues brought about by the actions of volunteers.

Risk assessments

Risk assessments should be done by LOs on behalf of their volunteers, minimising the amount of risk they are subject to. Risk should be considered when deciding on a role description and when deciding what activities participants and adults will do.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) identify the following five steps to risk assessment:

1. Identify the hazards;
2. Decide who might be harmed and how;
3. Evaluate the risks and decide on precaution;
4. Record your findings and implement them;
5. Review your assessment and update if necessary.

Health and safety

LOs have a general responsibility to make sure adults who volunteer for them are properly looked after. If your LO staff policies don't cover volunteers, either adapt them to make sure they do – and/or create a Health and Safety Statement. Use this template below, as a starting point. As with all document templates, seek advice before using them.

Confidentiality

Many organisations will decide that information is confidential between volunteer and Licensed Organisation. You may decide to have a similar policy and make it a part of the application or induction process.

Data protection

Data protection applies to volunteers too and it is essential to have a well-planned policy on dealing with all documents that relate to your volunteers. The information you collect and store needs to comply with the Data Protection Act. Make sure volunteers are aware of their responsibilities under the Act.

Avoiding a contract

It is very important to make sure volunteers are not treated in the same way as paid employees. Agreeing a volunteer policy and volunteer agreement are good ways to avoid a situation where a court may say a volunteer has been employed by your LO (and is eligible for the benefits of employment).

Safeguarding policy

Everyone involved in delivering DofE activity needs to be kept safe and each LO must have a safeguarding policy.

Safeguarding is a very important area to get right. Disclosures (e.g. a DBS check in England and Wales) are only one method of making sure volunteers are suitable for their DofE roles and for volunteering with young people. Criminal record checks should only be carried out if they meet the criteria of 'Regulated Activity'.

Volunteers should know and accept your LO's safeguarding policy and be informed of any amendments.



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Sample health and safety statement

The following shows our intention to make sure our volunteers are protected from risk as far as possible. We will ensure all volunteers are properly informed, well trained and equipped to undertake their role safely.

Our Health and Safety Policy covers volunteers and includes (for example):

- Information about risk assessments;
- Lone working policy;
- Child protection policy.

All voluntary roles/activities will be risk assessed and reviewed on a regular basis.

Lone working policy

It is good practice to have a lone working policy that covers volunteers. This will be more suitable for some roles than others – e.g. for the Expedition Supervisor.

You might include:

- Who does the Lone working policy cover?
- Emergency contact information and procedures;
- Risks to lone working volunteers.

Emergency procedures

Volunteers may find themselves in an emergency situation. Having an organisational emergency procedure makes clear what the response should be and should also highlight where to find help.

Adapting any existing procedures (for example, they are often part of Health and Safety policies) to make them suitable for volunteers should happen before you start to use them.

Making them easily available is also important, for example as part of the induction period (see section 5).

4: Application and appointment

The previous section gave some ideas on how to find new adults and then deciding on suitable voluntary roles for them. We've also looked at making sure you have the policies and procedures in place to support volunteers. This section now looks at volunteers applying to do a role (once they've found one they're interested in) and your LO appointing them to the position.

The previous section gave some ideas on how to find new adults and then deciding on suitable voluntary roles for them. We've also looked at making sure you have the policies and procedures in place to support volunteers.

This section now looks at volunteers applying to do a role (once they've found one they're interested in) and your LO appointing them to the position.

Volunteer application

Although practices will vary, and there is no one ideal application process, asking volunteers to formally apply for a role (e.g. through completing an application form) has a number of benefits.

It may be the first opportunity for the LO to collect their contact details and other relevant information.

It is a positive way to find out more about them, why they want to do the role and make sure you can welcome them to the organisation properly.

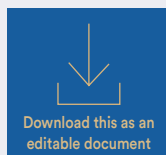
Most importantly, it should be part of your process for deciding if they are a suitable person for the role and for your organisation.

Expression of interest form

You may like to create an 'Expression of interest' form. After hearing about a role, volunteers may wish to enquire about the role, without actually applying for it. Having this form on your website is a good way to receive online enquiries and send them further information.

It shouldn't be too complicated or ask for too many details at this stage (see also the 'Sample volunteer sign up sheet' on page 10).





Expression of interest form template

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with <Insert LO name>. Please complete the information below and return to <Insert contact name>. We will contact you as soon as possible with further information about volunteering with us.

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Which voluntary role(s) are you interesting in finding out more about?

If unsure, please let us know if you have any particular interests or experience you would like to gain:

Thank you again for your interest in volunteering with us. We will be in touch very soon.

Volunteer application form

The application form can be amongst the first contact you have with a potential volunteer.

For many volunteers, overly long or officious application forms will be a 'deal breaker'.

So make it positive, informative, welcoming and non-threatening.

Here are three tips on creating an application form:

- Keep it simple. Too much information on forms will not give a good impression to most adults.
- Ideally go through the role description and application form together, in person. This allows you to expand on the role and the application process, without needing to overwhelm the volunteer with documents.
- Make sure you add in to the application form any other relevant organisational procedures you have.





THE DUKE OF
EDINBURGH'S AWARD.

<LO logo>



Volunteer application form template

Thank you for expressing an interest in volunteering to help run the DofE with <Insert LO name>. Please complete the below and return to the <Insert DofE Manager name>.

Personal details

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Post Code: _____

Email _____ Date of birth: _____

Contact phone number _____

Additional needs: _____

Volunteer role details

DofE role applied for _____

Group/centre: _____

Specify which group/centre you mean if there is more than one at the LO.

Time availability: _____

Suitability for the role

Experience, training or qualifications: _____

Make suitable for the role – e.g NGB Awards if they are required.

Why interested in the role? _____

Comments on suitability: _____

Referees *(We will contact them for a reference)*

Add any criteria – e.g. that they must not be relatives

Name and address 1: _____

Email: _____

Relationship to you: _____

Name and address 2: _____

Email: _____

Relationship to you: _____

Please contact the <Insert DofE Manager name> if you have any questions and return the form to them once complete. They will contact you as soon as possible to discuss the next steps (which may include a Disclosure Check, depending on your role).

Make clear which national check

Add in any other information that is relevant to your LO

Thank you again for your interest.

Interview:

You should interview all potential volunteers who would volunteer for your organisation directly. However, the format for the interview can be flexible, depending on time, availability and what they are offering to do.

For some roles, it can be very difficult to assess someone's suitability without a face to face meeting to make sure they are appropriate.

The location, timescale and amount of people needed for the interview should all be flexible and based on the specific situation or role you are trying to recruit to.

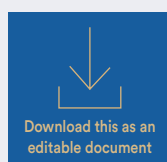
Some organisations will treat an interview as a hoop for potential volunteers to jump through. This is often off-putting. It will usually be more

welcoming to view the interview as a positive opportunity to meet the potential volunteer and talk about the role and why they are suitable.

If the role they have applied for is not suitable for them at this time, they may be ready for it at a later date. They may be able to do another role in the meantime.

Think carefully about who might do volunteer interviews and if they need any advice or training beforehand. They are an opportunity for both volunteer and organisation to decide whether or not to pursue the role further.

Making it positive, informative and welcoming, possibly even calling it an 'informal chat' is most likely to be successful. Make sure that you inform them that this is still part of the decision-making process.



Sample volunteer interview questions

(Ideally the conversation will be informal – use these to help get started)

1: Did you do your DofE? If so, tell me about the experience.

2: Have you volunteered anywhere else?

3: What do you hope to gain from volunteering with us?

4: What support can we give you to make your volunteering a more positive experience?

5: Do you have any questions about the role?

6: How much time do you have available to volunteer? Do you have any limits on travel?

7: Why do you want to volunteer for us?

Have a list of questions about the specific role, to determine if the person is suitable:

Reference form

You may ask for references using the application form, but you may like to ask for them separately.

Volunteer reference form template

<Insert Volunteer's Name> has applied for a voluntary role at <Insert LO Name>. As part of our appointment process, we ask for two references and they have given us your name.

We would very much appreciate your response to the following questions, to help us make sure they are suitable for the role. All replies are strictly confidential.

In what capacity do you know this person?

How long have you known them?

Do you think they would make a good volunteer?

*You may wish to add further
information about the role*

Please comment on this person's suitability to work with children:

How would you describe their personality?

Is there anything else about them you feel we should know?

Please sign and return to <Insert LO's address>. Thank you very much for your response.

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____



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Appointment

Organisations will have different perspectives on how to decide if a volunteer application has been successful and whether the individual has shown that they will enjoy doing the role.

Making sure they are suited to the role (even if it's not the one they applied for) is the main aim. You will probably want a different plan for short term or 'one off' voluntary roles, or to welcome them to the organisation in a different way.

Once the role has been identified and the volunteer has applied for it, appointing them to it is the act of asking them formally to do it. You may at this point do one of the following:

- Register them on your database (or other recording method).
- Have a welcome ceremony or presentation.
- Present them with a welcome letter (see letter template below) or pack.

By 'appointing' them, you are also giving a start date to their role. This also gives you the

opportunity to agree in advance how long the period might be for (e.g. the role lasts for three years). This gives a natural point to aim for (through reviews), without it seeming like an open-ended commitment.

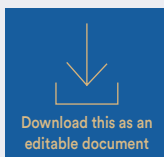
Volunteer agreement

Many organisations do have a volunteer agreement, where the volunteer signs to say what they are committing to do.

We prefer to suggest a volunteer policy (see section 3) as it is more aspirational. A 'memorandum of understanding' is a similar idea to a volunteer policy, with a list of hopes and expectations on both sides.

Asking volunteers to be committed is one thing and of course you want people to be reliable. But a fundamental element of volunteering is that you are not bound by a contract.

The application form is another way to ask volunteers to sign their agreement, but be cautious and remember they are not staff members.



Welcome letter template

(Date) <Insert LO name/address/logo>

(Name and address)

Dear <Insert Volunteer's name>,

Thank you very much for applying to volunteer with <Insert LO name>.

We have approved your application and are delighted to welcome you to the role of
<Insert role title>.

I will contact you to discuss your first day and have put an induction pack in the post to you. It gives you a lot of information about the role and organisation and will get you started.

The DofE has never been more successful in <Insert LO name> and I look forward to working with you to make sure that continues next year.

Yours sincerely,

Volunteer Manager

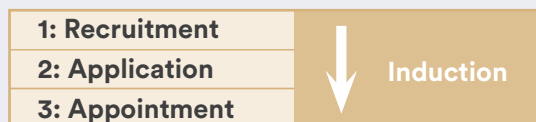
5: Induction and training

Section 5 looks at the management that volunteers need from LOs. This starts with their induction – which is their introduction to the role, to the organisation and any training they need. Volunteer Managers also give ongoing support to each volunteer, making sure they feel well supported and capable of doing their role (see Section 6).

Induction

Two factors can contribute to volunteers leaving their roles. Firstly, volunteers may feel they don't have the skills or information to do the role. They may also become bored and feel they are failing to progress with their volunteering. Having an induction plan is essential to making sure they start off on the right foot.

Induction should happen throughout the period you are getting to know the volunteer and helping them to choose a suitable role. Think of it as three steps to get them involved, with a supportive induction running alongside.

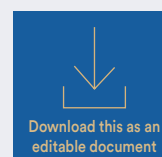


Induction continues in earnest when their role starts. They need to be given the tools to do their role, to meet people and to feel a part of the organisation. The template below can be added to or deleted as appropriate, but think about it in advance of their first day in the role.

Induction checklist template

- Volunteer induction for <Insert DofE Volunteer name> (Expedition Support Team)
- First day in role: ____/____/____
- Volunteer Manager: <Insert Volunteer Manager name>. (e.g. the DofE Manager)

What	Who	When	Complete
Personal			
Introduction to staff & volunteers			
Tour of the building - e.g. use of kitchen, bathroom			
The role			
Role description			
Volunteer agreement - e.g. confidentiality			
Training			
The organisation			
Organisational chart			
Staff job descriptions			
Role of volunteers and staff - Volunteer policy/ethos			
DofE numbers/situation (e.g. participation numbers)			
Policies & procedures			
Health & safety (including emergencies)			
Equal opportunities			
Volunteer Policy			
Child protection			
Confidentiality			
Data protection and data access			
DofE Code of Behaviour			
Practical Support			
Support and supervision			
Expenses			
Training			
Volunteer Management catch ups			
DofE resources, website and eDofE			



Induction pack

Creating an induction (or information) pack can be an ideal way to make sure you give all the key information/policies/documents to the volunteer when they start.

You may have included this information elsewhere already (most of it is referred to in the induction checklist template) but here's how the content might look:



Induction pack – suggested content

Information about the organisation

- Organisational chart and key staff roles
- Overview of the organisation
- Contact list
- Forthcoming events (*with sign-up details*)
- Organisational kit (e.g. polo shirt)
- Staff ID card/lanyard

The DofE

- *The Handbook for DofE Leaders*
- Adult volunteering leaflet

Organisation policies

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Information on health and safety, confidentiality, data protection, risk assessments

Information for the role

- Induction checklist
- Role description
- Training Needs Analysis
- DofE training information
- List of useful websites
- DofE Code of Behaviour (*LOs may have their own code of behaviour*)

Administration

- Application form
- Supervision review form
- Expenses claim form
- Welcome letter

Training, learning and development

Voluntary roles can change over time and you may ask volunteers to do new and different tasks. This is generally good and is likely to keep people interested. There shouldn't be an expectation that they will want to.

Having an accessible training calendar (e.g. on your website) makes it easier for staff and volunteers to prepare for and consider new training opportunities.

It is important to make sure that a volunteer continues to have the skills to do the role (and any new tasks). It is important to retain existing skills and gain new ones.

Whilst you may not always have the resources to put volunteers on expensive training courses, you can assist their learning in other ways.

Consider:

- 'Buddying' newer volunteers with more experienced volunteers;
- Running internal training courses or information

sharing sessions;

- Linking up with established training sessions where possible (e.g. within other local schools or LOs);
- Asking departing volunteers to share their learning experiences with you and pass that on to volunteers when needed.

Training needs

Use the Training Needs Analysis template below to try and identify the learning needs of a volunteer.

DofE Training

For example, a Leader who is thinking of also becoming an Expedition Assessor would need to do the Expedition Assessors Accreditation Scheme (EAAS) course. DofE training information can be found at [DofE.org/training](https://www.dofe.org/training). Direct volunteers to this page and help them find any DofE training that they may need (or wish) to do.

Training Needs Analysis documents can take many forms but the main aim is to work out which parts of their role need extra learning and what training can be done to help.

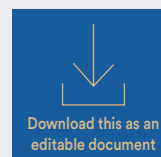
Training Needs Analysis template

Name: _____

Volunteer role: _____

No	Main tasks of volunteer role	Training required (Y or N)	Training Need Identified	How will it be achieved?	Action taken
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Date of next discussion: ____/____/____



6: Managing volunteers (post-induction)

This section looks at managing volunteers beyond their initial induction period. Making sure they remain supported is a key element of keeping them informed and interested. Claiming expenses is often a source of conflict and is definitely something to have a clear procedure on. Reviews are an opportunity to make sure volunteers are happy and are feeling well supported.

Expenses

Agree an expenses policy for volunteers and make it available to a volunteer when they apply for the role. Make it flexible to take into account the different activities for different roles – e.g. travelling to different parts of the country for expeditions.

Whilst volunteers ideally should not be out of pocket for volunteering, many organisations find it difficult to pay them. Having a clear policy allows potential and new volunteers to understand the position before they start the role.

Some things to consider:

- Only out of pocket expenses are normally reimbursed;
- Define in advance what an acceptable expense is;
- Be very clear if you have a limit on the amount/ type of expense claim that volunteers can make;
- On rare occasions, some volunteers may see expenses as a way to gain tax-free income. Have clear guidance on acceptable expenses (e.g. ask to see receipts);
- Not paying expenses limits the type and number of potential volunteers;
- Some people will be reluctant to claim expenses. There shouldn't be any expectation that they will decline to claim for them.



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Expenses claim form template

Name: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Volunteer role: _____

We can authorise claims for the following (*illustrative examples shown, please use your own*):

- (e.g. mileage whilst volunteering)
- (e.g. daily food claim, up to £xxx limit)
- (e.g. for use of home internet for DofE purposes)

Ask your Volunteer Manager for the guidance on claiming expenses and the maximum claimable amount.

General expenses

Date	Expense claim	Amount

Mileage claim – our current mileage rate (for petrol or diesel) is XX pence per mile.

Date	Reason for trip	Mileage	Amount

Please keep receipts for all expense claims and give them to your Volunteer Manager, along with this form.

Volunteer Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Volunteer Manager's signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Supervision and reviews

Volunteer reviews are often shied away from and seen as too formal and similar to a paid role. This perception can be avoided. Reviews can be an excellent opportunity for both volunteer and Volunteer Manager to see how they are getting on and if any further support, training or information would help.

'Informal' reviews

Reviews can and should be an ongoing feature of the relationship between a volunteer and a Manager, the kind of interaction that often happens naturally.

This might include:

- Phone calls;
- Email exchanges;

- Other online communication;
- A quick chat at the end of the expedition training session.

Reviews allow Volunteer Managers to maintain a positive relationship and to check if volunteers have any worries, concerns or questions.

This Supervision form can be used by both volunteer and Manager to record any issues they want to discuss the next time there is an opportunity.

It does not need to be a long-term record that replaces informally catching up, but some people may find it gives a helpful structure to discussions.

Make the atmosphere relaxed and in a calm environment if possible.

Adapt the template printed below to include some key questions to ask them.

Supervision form template

Use this form to record the regular, perhaps informal, discussion meeting between volunteers – **<Insert volunteer role title>** and their **<Insert Volunteer Manager name>**.

The main points of the discussion, made by either the volunteer or Volunteer Manager, can be recorded (including any actions) for future reference and to ensure nothing gets lost.

Volunteer name: _____

Volunteer Manager name: _____

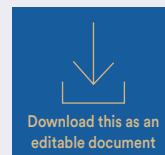
Date: ____/____/____

Main discussion points

Actions agreed upon

Issues to refer to next time

Proposed date of next meeting: ____/____/____

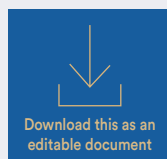


‘Formal’ reviews

This could be done once a year or more and is a more formal opportunity to reflect properly on what’s happened – and to identify any skills, training or information that is needed. They don’t need to be ‘formal’ in a business sense and are a

defined opportunity to discuss things away from the normal busy schedules.

Use the following template to structure volunteer reviews:



Volunteer review form template

It has been <XX months/years> since the last review. This is an opportunity to review your recent experience and to help plan some goals/things you’d like to achieve in the next <XX months/years>.

Volunteer name: _____

Volunteer Manager name: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Since the last review, consider:

What has gone well? What have you enjoyed the most?

What challenges have you faced?

Are you happy with the level of support and amount of meetings we’ve had?

Do you need any further training?

Have your personal circumstances changed – do you still have the same amount of time available?

Do you have any goals we can try and achieve in the next period?

Learning Points (a record for the Volunteer Manager for issues to raise at a later date):

Proposed date of next meeting: ____/____/____

Depending on the role and your organisation, the review may be a way to decide if someone is still suitable for the voluntary role they have and to make a recommendation for their future volunteering. Some suggested options might be:

- To stay with the same role (e.g. with a new set of goals and targets, or training to look forward to);
- To move on to a new role (e.g. if they have been a DofE Leader for years, they may want to consider becoming an Expedition Assessor);
- To leave the role entirely (e.g. for a break and to consider whether to return).

This is not always an easy process to complete but it often means that long-term volunteers are given new challenges and options, rather than remain doing a role they have long since stopped enjoying.

Communication

Communicating with volunteers is a key component of dealing with volunteers. Picking an appropriate communication method is important. Volunteers are unlikely to respond well to formal or business-like communications. Try instead to find out their communication preferences (e.g. email, letter, phone calls, in person etc.) and use them where possible.

Performance management

Volunteers are not paid members of staff and so issues of performance must be seen and

considered differently. With volunteers it is often forgotten that training, information or support might be the factors that need addressing. Agreeing a procedure in advance can help to avoid disputes or complaints becoming complicated to deal with.

Managing volunteers may lead to dealing with difficult situations that need to be addressed – e.g. disagreements between volunteers and issues of performance.

Think about these things in advance and try to stop issues from developing beyond the initial problem or situation.

Succession planning

Volunteers are often one of the main reasons that a DofE group can keep going. It is all too easy for a volunteer to feel that they are bound to the situation and that the DofE group will fail without them. This scenario runs a real risk that volunteers feel 'bound' to the situation and are likely to be less happy in their role.

Volunteer recruitment is a long term initiative and a Volunteer Manager needs to be on the lookout for new people all the time. Thinking in particular about crucial roles (e.g. the DofE Leader) needs to be an ongoing concern.

As mentioned previously, others may be able to take on a role with enough time, encouragement and training. Remembering this in advance of someone leaving may ultimately save a lot of time, effort and panic.



7: Retaining volunteers

Keeping volunteers motivated, interested and happy in their role is a key task of the Volunteer Manager. Making a proactive effort to retain your volunteers will help the running of your DofE programmes and you may avoid spending a lot of time finding new volunteers.

This section looks therefore at the ways you can show your appreciation of your volunteers and keep them involved with the organisation when they finish one particular role. Making this an ongoing feature of managing your volunteers is the easiest way to set this up.

Thanking volunteers

Showing your appreciation of volunteers should be a central aspect of managing the DofE group/centre.

You don't need to go overboard and many volunteers will not be actively seeking praise or recognition. However, showing your appreciation will be welcomed and is an important aspect of managing volunteers.

You can use a number of different methods, including the following:

In person

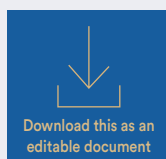
In a large organisation this won't always be possible but at training, events, meetings etc thank you messages can be adopted where possible.

Messages

Emails and other communication methods are an effective way to get more ad-hoc messages out, for example after a particularly busy expedition season or after a very successful group of Awards achieved. You can use one-off messages such as Volunteers Week volunteersweek.org to show general appreciation. Thank you cards may be difficult to do for large groups but can also be well received.

Thank you letter

Sometimes a more formal letter of appreciation is going to be needed. This might be after a particularly busy time of year, to celebrate a milestone or something similar. Use the template below to create your own version.



Sample volunteer thank you letter

(Date) <Insert LO name/address/logo>

(Name and address)

Dear <Insert Volunteer's name>,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your brilliant efforts with the centre this year.

We have had another outstanding year, with <XXX> numbers of DofE Awards being achieved. This simply wouldn't have happened without your help. We particularly benefited from your time on <XXX> (e.g. for stepping in to help run the expedition in June, when one of the other members of the team was unwell).

My thanks again for all your hard work and for this project in particular.

Yours sincerely,

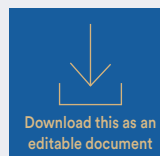
Volunteer Manager

Thank you certificate

Thank you certificates are probably not going to be useful every week and will benefit from being reserved for special occasions. This might be when a volunteer leaves or when they reach a certain number of years volunteering with you. Use this template to create a version for your LO.

You can download a template for printing these certificates from [here](#), which can then be printed onto blank certificates available from DofE Essentials. Access DofE Essentials by logging into eDofE.

Bespoke logos may be ordered free of charge from DofE.org/logo.



The Patron, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh KG KT,
The Trustees and Directors of

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Express their sincere thanks
for the support given by

Jeffrey Lynne

for your part in helping to provide
a programme for young people that encourages
their self-development and recognises
their achievements.

1 September 2019

DATE

HRH THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH KG KT

Rewarding and recognising volunteers

Again, volunteers will not be expecting huge banquets in their name every week. But setting your LO up to have a system of reward and recognition is a very good way to show appreciation, especially in a larger organisation. Some have very well established systems of awards, certificates, badges and more. Adopt a few of them if they seem suitable.

Award ceremonies

These could be one off or regular events, awarded at a national or more local level. However you decide to set them up, they are a good opportunity to thank volunteers for their efforts and present certificates/awards/gifts etc. Although there is likely to be a cost involved, they are often popular and are a great way to talk to a volunteer group at the same time. They can also generate positive publicity and be an opportunity to recruit potential volunteers.

Long service

Showing that your organisation remembers when volunteers reach a certain length of time with you is also likely to be well received. Choose a number

that fits your organisation (e.g. one, three or five years) and select a way to mark reaching that milestone. Ask your DofE Regional/Country Office for a nomination for long service form.

Volunteers leaving their roles

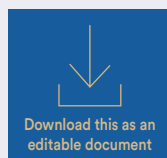
Moving on to other roles:

Always be on the lookout for other roles that a volunteer could be doing. Volunteers can stick with the same role for considerable lengths of time.

Volunteer Managers can help to avoid those volunteers becoming tired of the role, the organisation or of doing a DofE-related role. See the review section for more information.

Exit interview/questionnaire

As well as being an opportunity to thank them for their efforts, it is important to try and gauge the quality of experience they have had as a volunteer with your LO. Volunteers may not always formally 'resign'. Use the 'exit interview' to encourage a positive end to their volunteering and allow you to learn from their experience. The following questions are intended to cover the experience they had as a volunteer and any learning you can take from it.



Exit interview template

Thank them for their time and efforts whilst volunteering with <Insert LO name>.

Volunteer name: _____

Volunteer Manager name: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Ask for information on the following:

- Have you enjoyed your volunteering?
- Did it meet the expectations you had when you started the role?
- Did you feel sufficiently supported to do the role?
- Could the LO have provided more support to make the volunteering more enjoyable?
- Would you recommend volunteering with the LO to anyone else?
- What was the best experience you had when volunteering?
- And the worst experience?
- Is there any other feedback you would like to give?

The information recorded here will be used to support volunteers in the LO in the future.

Recording the information and following up on it is important and makes the process worthwhile. For example, if the response from several volunteers in succession is that they would not recommend volunteering with your LO, that suggests a pattern that needs investigating.

A variation on this is the Volunteer Feedback Form, which could be done as needed or at regularly spaced intervals (e.g. once a year). This gives volunteers a valuable opportunity to feed their thoughts in and raise any concerns to the LO.

Volunteer feedback template

Thank them for their time and efforts whilst volunteering with **<Insert LO name>**.

Volunteer name: _____

Volunteer Manager name: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Please help us to improve the volunteer experience at **<Insert LO name>**.

The information provided here will help us to improve the way we support all volunteers.

Do you enjoy your volunteering?

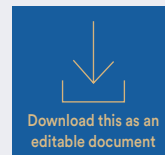
Is there anything we can do to make your experience better?

Do you feel you have enough information to do your role properly?

If 'no', please record which areas are missing.

Is there anything you would like us to know?

Many thanks for your continued support.



8: Useful links

The following resources/organisations/webpages are further sources of information on the DofE or on volunteering. We hope reading this resource has inspired you to find out more and use these links to support volunteers within your LO.

DofE websites and pages

- [DofE.org](https://www.dofe.org) – the DofE’s website for all audiences.
- [eDofE.org](https://www.edofe.org) – the DofE’s online recording system. eDofE is the only way for new participants to record their progress through their DofE. If you are an Assessor, you will upload reports to a participant’s eDofE account. Most adult roles can sign in to see information about their group/centre. Talk to your Volunteer Manager to ask if you have access. You can also use it to find resources and other information that will help with your DofE role.

For volunteer recruitment

- [do-it.org.uk](https://www.do-it.org.uk) Do-It is the national volunteering database, with over one million voluntary opportunities advertised. See page 11.

Scotland
volunteerscotland.org.uk
youngscot.org

Wales
volunteering-wales.net

Northern Ireland
volunteernow.co.uk

England
volunteering.org.uk

Youth volunteer awards (See page 9)

- **v-Inspired** (UK, 14-25 years) vinspired.com/get-awards
- **Saltire Awards** (Scotland, 12-25 years) saltireawards.org.uk/youngperson/saltire-overview
- **Millennium Volunteers** (Wales, 14-25 years) gwirvol.org/en/volunteers/get-involved/become-a-millennium-volunteer/
- **Millennium Volunteers** (Northern Ireland, 14-25 years) youngcitizens.volunteernow.co.uk/millennium-volunteers



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