



Photo: Plymouth Sound National Marine Park



# The Volunteer Recruitment Playbook



Rethink recruitment, remove friction, and design experiences volunteers say yes to.

# The Volunteer Recruitment Playbook

Volunteer recruitment is not a transactional task – it's a strategic driver of impact.

This guide is designed for organisations navigating modern recruitment pressures. It brings together practical frameworks, expert insight, and actionable tools to help you build sustainable, inclusive, and high-performing volunteer programmes.

## AT A GLANCE:

- **CONTEXT & PRESSURES:** Why volunteer recruitment feels harder today – from time scarcity to rising expectations.
- **UNDERSTANDING THE MODERN VOLUNTEER:** Motivations, availability, and what makes volunteering feel “worth it”.
- **DESIGNING ROLES THAT CONVERT:** Creating clear, flexible, purpose-led opportunities that attract the right people.
- **THE DIGITAL FRONT DOOR:** Reducing friction across websites, portals, and communications.
- **REMOVING STRUCTURAL BARRIERS:** Expanding access through inclusive, accessible programme design.
- **CONVERSION & ACTIVATION:** Measuring and improving the gap between application and first shift.
- **RETENTION AS A STRATEGY:** Turning one-off volunteers into long-term contributors.
- **PERFORMANCE & PARTNERSHIPS:** Tracking what matters and leveraging corporate pathways to scale sustainably.





# Executive summary

By Casper Harratt,  
**GENERAL MANAGER - UK & EUROPE AT ROSTERFY**

Volunteers remain deeply motivated to contribute to their communities and the causes they care about. They underpin health, social care, fundraising, sport, culture, and community services – delivering enormous social and economic value. In 2024, volunteers provided 688 million hours of unpaid work in the UK, equivalent to £15.5bn in economic value.<sup>1</sup>

## **Yet recruitment has become more complex.**

People are willing to volunteer, but time is scarce. Rising living costs, unpredictable work patterns, caring responsibilities, and longer working lives mean that availability is limited. At the same time, demand for volunteer support continues to grow.

## **The challenge is no longer inspiration – it is friction.**

Many volunteer programmes are still run as logistical functions rather than strategic systems. Fragmented processes, unclear roles, slow communication, and rigid expectations create avoidable barriers. High application numbers often mask hidden drop-offs between enquiry and activation.

## **Research reinforces this shift:**

- Six in ten voluntary organisations report difficulties recruiting volunteers, and around four in ten say recruiting regular volunteers has become harder in recent years.<sup>2</sup>
- Half of prospective volunteers cite lack of time as the biggest barrier, followed by uncertainty about commitment, unclear pathways, and lack of awareness of opportunities.<sup>3</sup>

This guide is here to help you rethink how recruitment works in practice – to remove the barriers that hold people back and create experiences that feel genuinely worth their time. Because when you get that right, you don't just recruit volunteers – you build lasting engagement and greater impact.

# The recruitment challenge

Recruiting volunteers today is less about inspiring people to give their time and more about removing barriers and creating experiences that fit into their busy lives. Without deliberate design and strategic approaches, recruitment becomes reactive, retention suffers, and programmes struggle to meet organisational goals.



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*Over the last few years I've seen a shift from long-term, open-ended commitments toward shorter, more flexible, and more clearly defined roles. People are increasingly expecting roles to fit around their complex lives, irregular work hours, caring responsibilities. What hasn't changed is the motivation of volunteers and not tolerating inefficiency and a poor volunteer experience.*

– Victoria Dickinson, Volunteering Consultant



### Rosterfy's role: The strategic enabler

Rosterfy's centralised, secure platform manages the full volunteer lifecycle – from recruitment and onboarding to credential tracking, scheduling, communication, and impact reporting. It supports **5 million users** across more than **77 countries**, powering more than **150 million volunteer hours**. Rosterfy enables organisations to attract and mobilise volunteers faster, demonstrate impact, and scale volunteer programmes sustainably.

 VOLUNTEER AVAILABILITY	 FRAGMENTED PROCESSES	 RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS	 CHANGING VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS
<b>KEY PRESSURE</b>	<b>KEY PRESSURE</b>	<b>KEY PRESSURE</b>	<b>KEY PRESSURE</b>
People still want to volunteer, but time is scarce. Rising living costs, unpredictable work schedules, and caring responsibilities limit capacity, widening the gap between community need and volunteer supply.	Manual sign-ups, unclear role descriptions, and disconnected systems slow recruitment, frustrate applicants, and increase administrative workload for staff.	Volunteer teams juggle multiple priorities. Limited capacity can slow responses, reduce strategic recruitment, and leave motivated volunteers unsupported, increasing pressure on the team.	Modern volunteers expect digital-first, flexible, and impact-focused experiences. Outdated or paper-based systems create friction, cause drop-offs, and reduce engagement.

### Recruitment success today depends on three strategic shifts:

1. Designing flexible, purpose-led roles
2. Removing friction from every stage of the volunteer journey
3. Measuring performance from application to retention

The following chapters provide practical frameworks, expert advice, and practical tools to help organisations move from reactive recruitment to sustainable volunteer growth.



# Understanding the modern volunteer

# Understanding the modern volunteer

Volunteers haven't disappeared – they remain deeply committed to causes they care about.



But modern life is busy. Work, family, caring responsibilities, and rising living costs mean that time is scarce, making every volunteering opportunity precious.

What unites modern volunteers is their expectation of seamless, rewarding experiences that make their time feel well spent. Motivation is not generational. Age is far less predictive than experience and context. Cross-generational research shows volunteers consistently value positive environments, growth opportunities, social interaction, and meaningful impact.<sup>4</sup>



*Time is a huge factor. Cost of living, post-Covid expectations, tech changes, and the increasing retirement age all affect who can volunteer and when. Organisations need to work with volunteers, not expect them to fit rigid structures.*

– Chris Wade, Director, Time for Impact

 CORE CHARACTERISTIC	 IMPLICATION FOR RECRUITMENT
DIVERSE MOTIVATIONS	Volunteers act out of purpose, social connection, skill development, and personal wellbeing. Recruitment messaging should address multiple drivers.
DIGITAL-FIRST EXPECTATIONS	Mobile-friendly applications, fast confirmation, clear next steps, and real-time updates are now standard.
FLEXIBLE AVAILABILITY	Volunteers need options that fit around work, study, or caring responsibilities. Offering modular or short-term roles should be the baseline.
IMPACT-FOCUSED	Volunteers want to see the difference they make. Transparent reporting of outcomes reinforces engagement and retention.

**KEY TAKEAWAY:** People want to volunteer, but only if the experience feels worth their time. Understanding your volunteers' preferences, motivations, and constraints is the foundation of effective recruitment.



## PRACTICAL EXERCISE

### Know your volunteers.

Understand the people giving their time and use insights to design better opportunities. **Use our Volunteer Insights Framework to:**

- Capture motivations, availability, and barriers
- Identify patterns and segment your audience
- Translate insights into actionable role design



[Access the Volunteer Insights Framework](#)



## Role design and clarity

# Role design and clarity

## Designing opportunities that convert.

One of the most common causes of recruitment struggle is mismatched role design. Roles are often written quickly, inherited from previous years, or shaped around organisational convenience rather than volunteer experience.

When people see vague descriptions such as “general volunteer support” or “help where needed,” they struggle to picture themselves in the role. Uncertainty creates hesitation – and hesitation leads to drop-off.

**FINDING:** Organisations with well-designed roles and clear volunteering strategies were significantly more likely to report recruitment as easy.<sup>5</sup>



*Recruitment now looks more like marketing: a specific offer, strong storytelling, and rapid onboarding matter far more than they used to.*

– Victoria Dickinson, Volunteering Consultant

**MARKETING MINDSET:** Think of volunteer recruitment like marketing. Your “offer” should be clear, compelling, and tailored to your audience.

### Every role should answer:

- What will I be doing?
- How much time will this take?
- Who will I be helping?
- What support will I receive?
- What difference will this make?

**EXAMPLE:** “Support 50 isolated older adults each week – 2 hours, evenings or weekends – and see the difference you make in your community.”

## Core elements of effective role design

1. **CLARITY:** Define responsibilities, time commitments, and what success looks like.
2. **IMPACT VISIBILITY:** Show who benefits and how the role contributes to the mission.
3. **SUPPORT:** Outline training, supervision, tools, and key contacts.
4. **FLEXIBILITY:** Offer modular, one-off, remote, or seasonal opportunities to fit modern lives.



**TIP:** Lead with purpose and impact, not tasks. Volunteers are more likely to apply and stay when they can see the bigger picture.



*Flexibility should be the baseline, not the addition to volunteering models. Like many people, I work full time, which means I can only volunteer if roles are genuinely flexible. What has worked well for me as a volunteer myself are organisations that offer remote volunteering and evening opportunities.*

– Laura Elson, Independent Volunteering Strategy Consultant



## PRACTICAL EXERCISE

### Design volunteer roles that convert.

Create clear, purpose-led roles that attract the right volunteers and reduce drop-offs. **Use our Role Design Template to:**

- Define responsibilities and time commitments
- Highlight the impact of the role on your cause
- Build flexibility into shifts, location, and duration

[Access the Role Design Template](#)

## What makes a volunteer role genuinely attractive?

**We asked volunteering experts what makes someone not just interested in a role, but motivated to say yes.**

Across their responses, a few clear themes emerged. The most effective roles are not defined by tasks, but by experience. They are clear, purposeful, easy to access, and designed to fit around real lives.

What stands out most is this: volunteers want to see themselves in the role. They want to understand the impact they'll have, feel confident in what's expected, and know the experience will be worth their time.



*When the cause is front and centre. People rarely go into their search for a new volunteer role genuinely open minded about what they want to do. They'll be looking for the charity brands they know, causes they care about and movements they've enjoyed participating in. Showing what volunteers will achieve, like helping to end poverty, not just what tasks they will do, like steam donated clothes, is absolutely crucial.*

– Laura Elson, Independent Volunteering Strategy Consultant



*Making it easy to sign up.  
Easy to find out more before committing  
Something that appeals to certain demographics.  
Case study examples on social media.  
Informing of the difference they will make in their role.*

– Linda Fenn, former Head of Volunteering at British Heart Foundation



*Flexible, online, ease of application, well described with practical examples of how the role makes an impact. People seeing themselves doing the role.*

– Wendy Wasels, Head of Volunteering and Involvement at Arthritis UK



*It's important to be clear on what potential volunteers are signing up for, they need to understand the time commitment, responsibilities. They need to see that the organisation is organised and effective. Knowing they will be supported and training is available for the role, and they can see how it fits round their lives and work.*

– Victoria Dickinson, Volunteering Consultant



*There are three things I love to see in a volunteer role:*

- 1. What difference does my contribution make? If I'm giving my time, I want to know the impact. When volunteers understand the difference they're making, motivation follows.*
- 2. Am I going to have fun? That doesn't mean every role has to be light-hearted – some are serious and demanding – but, will I enjoy the environment, the people, the experience?*
- 3. Will I be out of pocket? If volunteering costs money, that's a barrier – full stop. If organisations aren't covering expenses, they are automatically narrowing who can take part.*

– Dan O'Driscoll, Founder of Engagement Consultancy



# The digital front door

# The digital front door

Volunteers' first interactions with your organisation are often digital.

Your website, volunteer portal, social media, and email communications form the 'digital front door', shaping whether interest becomes action.

Core principles of a high-performing digital front door

PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	RECRUITMENT IMPACT
CLARITY	Landing page clearly answers: "How do I volunteer?"	Reduced drop-off, faster application starts
SPEED	Forms load quickly, confirmation emails sent instantly	Increased conversion from enquiry to first shift
ACCESSIBILITY	Mobile-first design, clear language, multilingual support	Broader demographic reach, inclusion
TRANSPARENCY	Show roles, time commitment, training, impact	Builds trust, increases confidence to commit
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	Immediate auto-responses and next-step guidance	Volunteers feel valued, early engagement reinforced



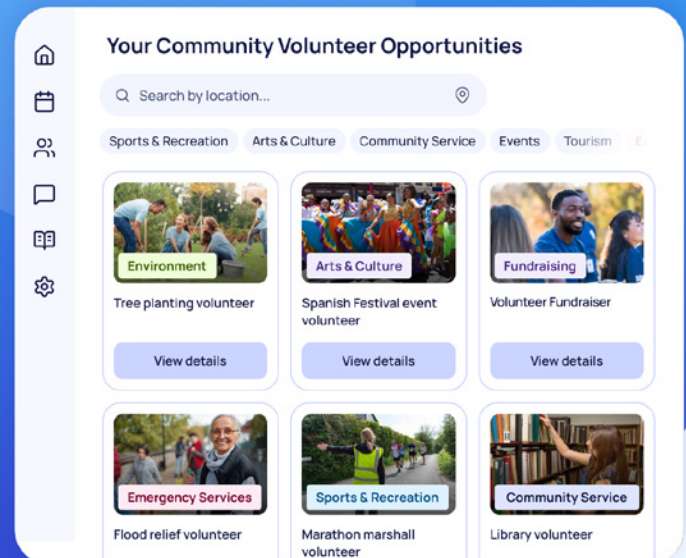
*Volunteers are looking for smooth digital experiences, easy sign-up, fast communication, and minimal bureaucracy. Long forms, delayed responses, or unclear next steps mean volunteers walk.*

– Laura Elson, Independent Volunteering Strategy Consultant



*The biggest barrier to volunteering is organisations assuming that the public have heard of them in the first place, or would know how to volunteer there. When organisations bring me in to understand why they are struggling to recruit volunteers, I often find that there's no call to action or information about volunteering on their website, social media, or in the spaces where they deliver their work.*

– Laura Elson, Independent Volunteering Strategy Consultant



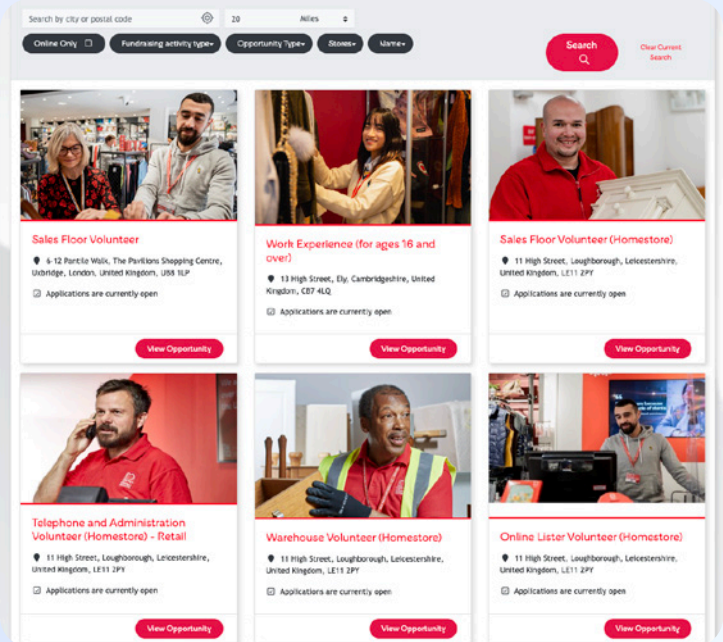
## The 30-second rule

Volunteers should be able to understand how to get involved within 30 seconds of landing on your website.

That means:

- Prominent call-to-action buttons (“Volunteer Now,” “Apply Today”) above the fold
- Clear and concise messaging about available roles
- Simple navigation to explore opportunities by type, location, or skill
- Immediate visibility of the impact of volunteering (quotes, images, or short videos)

**ACTION: Conduct a quick test internally:** ask someone unfamiliar with your organisation to navigate to a role and start an application. Note where friction occurs.



BHF MyVolunteer portal powered by Rosterfy



### CASE STUDY: BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION

When British Heart Foundation made volunteer opportunities more visible and reduced application steps using Rosterfy, the number of volunteers taking on multiple roles increased by 125%.

[Explore the case study](#)





# Removing barriers to unlock volunteer growth

# Removing barriers to unlock volunteer growth

Recruitment challenges are often framed as a shortage of volunteers.

In reality, many organisations face a shortage of accessible opportunities. Time, cost, and awareness remain the primary structural barriers to participation in the UK. <sup>6</sup> Barrier removal is about designing volunteer journeys that are accessible and inclusive by default.

The question is not “Why aren’t people applying?” but “Where are we making participation harder than it needs to be?”

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*Many organisations focus on attracting more volunteers without fixing what happens after someone expresses interest: slow responses, unclear roles, too much paperwork and hurdles. Organisations can be so wrapped up with what the organisation feels it should have in place and not thinking if this is relevant and creating a barrier, they can be too risk adverse.*

– Laura Elson, Independent Volunteering Strategy Consultant

## Quick barrier audit for volunteer programmes.





**Before redesigning your recruitment campaigns, start by assessing:**

- Are commitment levels flexible?
- Are shifts modular or short-term where possible?
- Is training proportionate to the role?
- Is language clear and free of jargon?
- Are travel or cost barriers acknowledged and mitigated?
- Is there visible diversity in our marketing and imagery?
- Are digital processes mobile-friendly and simple?



# Volunteering barrier removal framework

Use this framework to identify where access challenges may be limiting recruitment performance.

 BARRIER TYPE	 WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN RECRUITMENT	 PRACTICAL ADJUSTMENT	 RECRUITMENT IMPACT
AWARENESS	Low enquiries despite strong community presence	Add visible calls to action on website and social media, simplify “How to volunteer” pages	Increased enquiries and top-of-funnel growth
FINANCIAL	Limited postcode diversity, drop-off after enquiry	Publish clear expenses policy, reimburse travel, remove unnecessary costs	Wider socioeconomic participation
TIME & FLEXIBILITY	Applicant pool skewed to retirees or students	Offer evening/weekend shifts, trial sessions, modular commitments	Increased working-age applicants
PROCESS COMPLEXITY	High drop-off between registration and first-shift	Remove duplicate forms, modularise training, shorten time to placement	Improved conversion rate
PERCEPTION & REPRESENTATION	Narrow demographic profile in applicant pool	Review imagery and language, partner with community groups, showcase diverse volunteers	Broader applicant diversity



## CASE STUDY: BRADFORD CULTURE COMPANY

Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture reduced participation barriers by introducing multilingual resources and flexible roles. Their Rosterfy volunteer portal was translated into 13 languages, expanding access to typically underrepresented communities.

[Explore the case study](#)

Even the most inclusive recruitment process can lose volunteers between application and activation. The next chapter focuses on how to measure and close that gap.





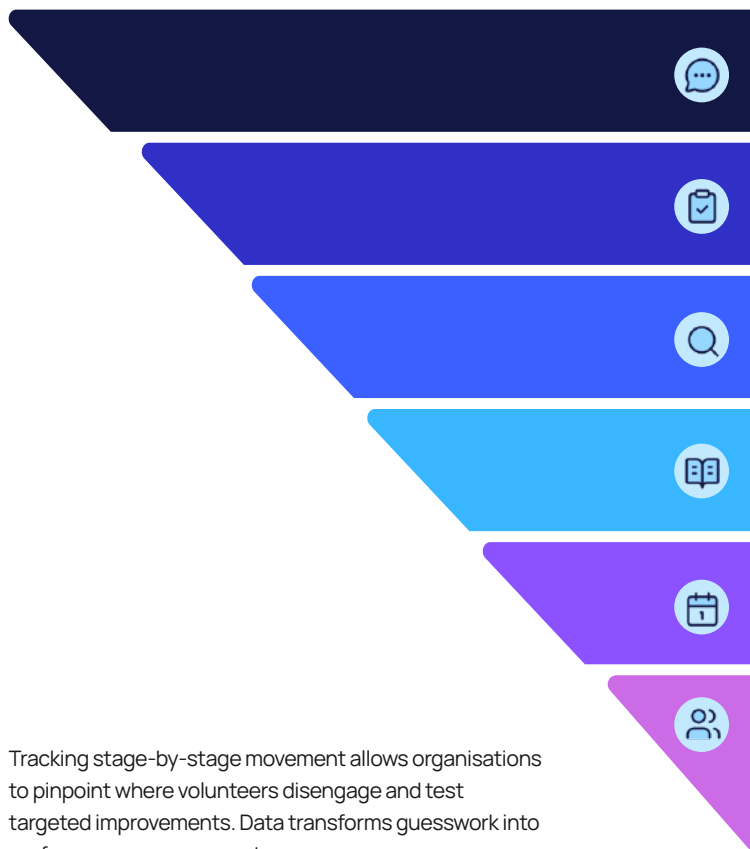
## Turning interest into action

# Turning interest into action

Recruitment isn't just about attracting people – it's about ensuring that those who say "yes" actually begin.

Between the moment someone applies and when they begin their first shift lies a commonly overlooked performance gap: volunteer conversion. High application numbers can be misleading – what feels like a recruitment shortage may actually be a conversion bottleneck.

## Volunteer Conversion Funnel: Identifying drop-off points.



- 01 ENQUIRY / APPLICATION**  
Volunteer expresses interest or submits initial application  
Drop-off: Delays after initial application
- 02 REGISTRATION SUBMITTED**  
Volunteer fills out forms and provides personal details  
Drop-off: Lengthy or repetitive registration forms
- 03 COMPLIANCE / BACKGROUND CHECKS**  
Identity verification, references, safeguarding checks  
Drop-off: Prolonged compliance checks
- 04 TRAINING & INDUCTION COMPLETED**  
Mandatory training, health & safety, role orientation  
Drop-off: Training delays
- 05 PRE-FIRST SHIFT ENGAGEMENT**  
Communication, scheduling, reminders before first shift  
Drop-off: Lack of communication
- 06 FIRST SHIFT STARTED**  
Volunteer begins active service

Tracking stage-by-stage movement allows organisations to pinpoint where volunteers disengage and test targeted improvements. Data transforms guesswork into performance management.



## What is the volunteer conversion rate?

Volunteer conversion rate is the percentage of people who apply to volunteer and go on to start their first shift.

$$\text{Volunteers who start} \div \text{Total applications} \times 100 = \text{Volunteer conversion rate (\%)}$$

### Working backwards from your target

Many organisations ask: “How many volunteers do we need to recruit?”

A more effective question is: “How many volunteers do we need to start?”

**EXAMPLE:** If your programme needs 1,000 volunteers to begin shifts and your conversion rate is 40%, you will need 2,500 applications.

If you improve conversion to 60% you only need 1,667 applications – 833 fewer applications for the same operational outcome.

Small improvements in conversion dramatically reduce marketing effort and recruitment pressure.

**KEY TAKEAWAY:** Volunteer recruitment is not only about attracting more people. It is about ensuring the people who say “yes” are supported to begin.



### CASE STUDY: LITERACY PIRATES

Literacy Pirates, a children’s charity, identified volunteer drop-off during their screening and background check process. By redesigning onboarding in Rosterfy – streamlining training, moving background checks later in the journey, and monitoring each stage of the funnel – they increased their volunteer conversion rate by 30%.

[Explore the case study](#)



### PRACTICAL EXERCISE

**Take the guesswork out of volunteer recruitment.**

Don’t just track applications – understand how many volunteers actually start and where drop-offs happen.

**Use our Volunteer Conversion Calculator to:**

- Calculate your current conversion rate
- Work backwards from your target number of volunteers
- Audit your funnel and pinpoint stages for improvement

[Access the Conversion Calculator](#)



# Retention as a recruitment strategy

# Retention as a recruitment strategy

Recruitment and retention are inseparable.

Retention is not driven by a single moment – it's the result of consistent, well-designed experiences over time. High-performing volunteer programmes focus on a small number of core principles that shape how volunteers feel, engage, and return.

## Core principles of volunteer retention.

### 1. STRONG FIRST EXPERIENCES

- Early interactions set expectations. When volunteers feel welcomed, informed, and supported from the outset, they are far more likely to continue.
- Focus on creating a clear, structured introduction to your organisation – from initial communication through to first involvement.

### 2. RECOGNITION & FEEDBACK

- Volunteers need to know their time and contribution matter. Recognition reinforces value, while feedback creates a sense of progress and belonging.
- This can be simple but should be consistent – from informal thank-yous to more structured recognition moments.

### 3. CONSISTENT, RELEVANT COMMUNICATION

- Ongoing engagement relies on communication that is timely, clear, and aligned with volunteer preferences.
- Keeping volunteers informed about opportunities, updates, and impact helps maintain connection between moments of activity.

### 4. FLEXIBLE & MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES

- Volunteers are more likely to return when opportunities fit around their lives and feel worthwhile.
- Offering flexible formats – such as short-term, modular, or skills-based roles – allows more people to participate and continue contributing over time.

### 5. CLEAR PATHWAYS & PROGRESSION

- Retention strengthens when volunteers can see a future with your organisation.
- Creating opportunities for deeper involvement – whether through repeat participation, new responsibilities, or leadership roles – builds long-term commitment and a stronger sense of belonging.



**TIP:** Retention improves when experiences are consistent. Use VMS automation to deliver structured, personalised journeys across onboarding, communication, and ongoing engagement.



### CASE STUDY: GOLF AUSTRALIA & PGA OF AUSTRALIA

By improving communication, simplifying processes, and creating a more seamless volunteer experience, Golf Australia achieved an 82.3% annual retention rate – demonstrating how experience design directly impacts long-term engagement.

[Explore the case study](#)





## The first 90 days: Where volunteer retention (and recruitment) is won or lost

Contribution by Katie Bradshaw,  
**VOLUNTEERING CONSULTANT**

The first 90 days of a volunteer's journey are your most powerful retention tool. This is where expectations are met or quietly eroded, where confidence is built or lost, and where a volunteer decides, often subconsciously, whether they belong.

Harnessing this early enthusiasm is important. Small things make a disproportionate difference.

### Why early retention matters:

Organisations often focus on keeping volunteers once they begin to disengage, but by then it's usually too late. Retention is shaped early. Get the first 90 days right, and retention becomes a natural outcome, not a constant challenge.

### Key focus areas for the first 90 days:

1. **SMOOTH, RESPONSIVE ONBOARDING:** Clear communication, minimal delays, and a sense of momentum from sign-up to first volunteering activity.
2. **PEER CONNECTION EARLY ON:** Buddying, mentoring, or informal introductions build confidence and a sense of belonging.
3. **SAFE SPACES FOR QUESTIONS AND SUPPORT:** Volunteers should know where to go, who to ask, and feel comfortable doing so.
4. **FIT-FOR-PURPOSE TRAINING:** Practical, engaging, and clearly connected to the role (not just process-heavy).
5. **OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE AND BE HEARD:** Invite ideas, feedback, and reflection from the outset.
6. **CLARITY OF ROLE AND EXPECTATIONS:** Volunteers should understand what they're doing, why it matters, and what good looks like.
7. **EARLY MOMENTS OF RECOGNITION:** Acknowledging contribution quickly reinforces value and motivation.

When these elements are in place early, volunteers don't just stay – they advocate on your behalf. Retention becomes recruitment, reducing the need to continually replace volunteers and allowing your team to invest in strengthening the volunteer experience, rather than constantly starting again.





# Corporate partnerships to strengthen recruitment

# Corporate volunteering can be a strategic recruitment channel.

Corporate volunteering can be a strategic recruitment channel.

It introduces organisations to skilled professionals, younger cohorts, and individuals beyond existing networks. For many, volunteering begins through their workplace – making it a powerful entry point into longer-term engagement.



*Corporate volunteering isn't a "nice-to-have." It's a strategic enabler. Beyond the clear benefits it brings to both businesses and charities, volunteering helps employees build an emotional connection to the cause, which in turn makes them more likely to support it in different ways, including through fundraising.*

– Loris Konaizeh, Corporate Volunteering Manager at Alzheimer's Society

The key to success is intentional design and follow-up. Roles should be meaningful, clearly structured, and well supported. After participation, simple steps such as sharing impact stories or inviting volunteers to future opportunities can convert a one-off activity into longer-term engagement.

Partnerships with recognised employers also strengthen credibility and visibility. When employees have a positive experience volunteering through work, they are more likely to return independently or recommend the organisation to others.

## What corporate volunteering can deliver:

- **REACH:** Introduce your organisation to new audiences who may not already be connected to your cause.
- **SCALE:** Enable larger numbers of volunteers to participate through structured group opportunities.
- **PIPELINE:** Convert one-off participants into repeat volunteers, ambassadors, or supporters.
- **TRUST & VISIBILITY:** Employer partnerships increase credibility and raise awareness of volunteering opportunities.

**KEY TAKEAWAY:** Corporate volunteering works best when it is treated as a strategic partnership rather than a one-off activity. Thoughtful role design, clear expectations, and strong follow-up, make corporate partnerships a reliable source of new volunteers, advocates, and supporters.



### CASE STUDY: LONDON YOUTH GAMES

London Youth Games expanded its corporate volunteering approach as part of its wider volunteer strategy. By creating structured opportunities and giving corporate teams more autonomy, supported through Rosterfy's platform, LYG grew corporate volunteering participation by 48% and unique volunteers by 23%.

[Explore the case study](#)





# Measuring what matters

You can't improve what you don't measure. Tracking the right metrics shows whether recruitment and retention efforts are working. Beyond the numbers, it's about using those insights to tell stories that make volunteers feel their time and effort really matter.

Even a few well-chosen metrics can help you spot bottlenecks, track progress, and show the real impact of your volunteers. More importantly, sharing these insights as human stories reinforces purpose, celebrates contribution, and strengthens engagement.



**TIP:** Pick a few metrics that matter most to your programme. Then, turn the data into stories that celebrate volunteers' contributions, show the difference they make, and make them feel truly valued.

 METRIC	 WHY IT MATTERS
Applications received	Measures visibility of your roles and reach of campaigns
Volunteer conversion rate	% of applicants who go on to start their first shift; shows operational effectiveness
Time to first shift (activation)	How quickly volunteers move from sign-up to contribution
Retention / repeat volunteers	Tracks ongoing engagement and satisfaction

## Conclusion

Volunteer recruitment is no longer just about attracting people – it's about turning interest into action.

Modern volunteers are motivated, but busy lives, digital-first expectations, and complex processes create friction that causes drop-offs before the first shift.

Organisations that treat recruitment as a strategic system – designing flexible roles, removing barriers, and tracking volunteer journeys – can improve conversion, reduce repeated recruitment effort, and retain volunteers longer.

### Key strategic shifts:

- **PURPOSE-LED ROLES:** Clear responsibilities, impact, and flexible options.
- **FRictionLESS PROCESSES:** Streamlined applications, registration, training, and pre-shift engagement.
- **MEASURE AND OPTIMISE:** Track conversion at each stage to identify and remove bottlenecks.
- **RETENTION AS RECRUITMENT:** Onboarding, recognition, and progression build long-term engagement.
- **LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY:** Platforms like Rosterfy centralise volunteer management, automate communications, simplify scheduling, and provide real-time insights to improve conversion and retention.

See how Rosterfy can support your volunteer programme by booking a call with our team.

[Book a demo](#)



## Resources:

(A list of assets linked throughout the guide)

[VOLUNTEER INSIGHTS FRAMEWORK](#)

[ROLE DESIGN TEMPLATE](#)

[CONVERSION CALCULATOR](#)



## Sources:

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2. [Third Sector UK, 2024](#)
3. [Marie Curie online survey, 2026](#)
4. [What motivates different generations to volunteer, QUT](#)
5. [State of UK Volunteer Management 2025, Rosterfy](#)
6. [Time Well Spent Report 2023, NCVO](#)

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