



## Top Tips on How to Engage and Retain Volunteers

- **Show clarity:** Be sure that you know that you need a volunteer and the exact role and work you would like them to undertake, rather than fulfilling the position just because it has always existed. Be clear on the role's tasks and the amount of time you would like them to commit to the position. Roles can be a long-term opportunity or something in the short-term, both of which can appeal to budding volunteers; would you value one hour a week of support over having none?
- **Recruit responsibly:** produce a role description, listing only the expectations of the role, including DBS requirements, and do not be discriminatory in any way. Ensure more than one committee member sees applications to ensure a fair and equitable approach and that you meet the prospective volunteer before you appoint them, if you haven't already got to know them previously. That is the ideal time to see and take copies of their original identification and qualification (eg. coaching certificates) documents. Obtaining references would be considered good practice.
- **Recognise, reward and respond:** remember any volunteers you have are doing the role through their own choice, committing time and resource to help you. As such, be sure to recognise the efforts they are putting in; this can be as simple as a "Thank you" when a task is completed. Furthermore, reward them if opportunity allows, such as at award ceremonies. Show your gratitude for the work they have done for you and make sure you're always as efficient in responding to them as you would with any others, if they ask something or need assistance; all volunteers should have someone else they can call upon for support. Keep them updated on a regular basis with what is currently going on within the club, so they are aware how they fit in the 'big picture', as well as letting them contribute their views and ideas for improvement.
- **Do the basics:** be sure to make sure the new individuals are welcomed in as swiftly as possible; retention is lower when volunteers are made to wait to get started. Provide training, such as an induction, so the individual feels comfortable to perform the role they are signing up for. This includes introducing them to other committee members, making them aware of club policies and where they can find the items they need to fulfil their role. If you can let people role shadow or adopt a buddy scheme, people can become more comfortable in their position quicker. When you plan well, communicate effectively and plan appropriately, volunteers will know what is expected of them, understand what is going on and acquire the skills to achieve their outcomes, thus making them more confident, work smarter to produce better quality work, which means disruption for the club. Furthermore, if you have the capability to cover expenses then it is a nice touch to provide.
- **Advertise far and wide:** be sure to share any roles you have available as broadly and as early as possible, including outside the football-sphere. Utilise your local volunteer centre(s) and websites set-up specifically towards volunteer recruitment, such as do-it.org. There are those who may have the skills you're looking for who may not currently be directly engaged in the local community or football scene. Be conscious that not all roles require an interest or knowledge of the game. Make sure you contact everyone that expresses any initial interest

and keep them updated of future opportunities. Also utilise promotional material, social media, local media (always make a link to your volunteers in any media exposure) and promote volunteering on your website.

- **Ask within:** if you do not ask all of those within your club, such as the players, you never know who has the capability to help in voluntary positions; 66% of volunteer roles are shared through 'word of mouth'. Be sure to share the roles you need filling and the requirements of said positions, as you will have several individuals with strong skillsets around the club already who may be able to help, or role-share so the burden is lessened on others. Let people know they are needed; people like to be asked to help!

