



# 'How To' Guide

## Volunteer Recruitment

### Mission and Values | People

**This guidance will be useful for:** community transport providers looking to improve their volunteer recruitment.

### Contents

- Introduction .....2**
- The challenges faced by community transport providers .....2**
- Volunteer Recruitment.....3**
  - Step one: Define what is unique and attractive about your organisation ..... 3
  - Step two: Build a profile of the sort of volunteers you want to target..... 3
  - Step three: Ensure your volunteer publicity materials are up to date ..... 4
- Where could you look for volunteers?.....5**
  - Theme 1 – People who have appropriate driving/trustee qualifications/experience and have time to volunteer ..... 5
  - Theme 2 – People who are given time to volunteer e.g. organisations enabling staff to volunteer as part of their corporate social responsibility policy ..... 6
  - Theme 3 – Specifically targeting young people who may well have spare time to give to their local CT operator..... 6
- More information .....8**

## Introduction

This volunteer recruitment resource will support and guide community transport providers to recruit and retain more volunteers.

To attract and retain volunteers, it's important to create a unique and purposeful experience to ensure volunteers remain committed to giving their time to your organisation. This document outlines a number of ways in which your organisation can recruit and retain volunteers to ensure the sustainability of services in the long term. It's important to remember that the most essential resource of any organisation is its people. This guide forms part of a suite of resources on the subject of volunteer recruitment which also includes a toolkit on volunteer retention, recruiting trustees and board members and presentations.

## The challenges faced by community transport providers

**Community transport is a wide and varied sector, with organisations differing in size and resources, and with different volunteering needs. What unites the vast majority of organisations though, is that volunteers are at the very heart of what they do. And for many, in a world where people's time is being pulled in so many different directions, it's often difficult to effectively recruit and retain the number of volunteers you'd like.**

The recruitment and retention of volunteers is a long running challenge, and one that isn't specific to the community transport sector alone. One added challenge for CT providers however, is the extra complications that come with recruiting volunteer drivers since, not only are they searching for people willing to volunteer their time, but they also need to have a driving licence and often need to have D1 entitlement as well. This makes an already small pool of potential volunteers even smaller.

Another concern that we often hear from members is the challenges around succession planning, especially in smaller, predominantly volunteer run organisations. The need to have drivers, back office volunteers and trustees is vital to ensure the long-term functioning of any community transport provider. The skills, knowledge and commitment of volunteers, often working in roles such as chairs or transport coordinators, is vital and without an obvious succession plan in place when such an individual retires, there's a risk of that knowledge, and the organisation, being put at risk.

An additional comment that community transport providers in rural areas often make is that it can be difficult to attract volunteer drivers and back office volunteers in rural areas because rural areas tend to be low-income areas. This means that if people have spare time and are looking for opportunities to fill any spare time they may have, the general expectation is that this should be paid time because the local job market tends to be limited with generally low paid job roles. To address these challenges, it's important that community transport providers put in place a clear volunteering strategy, which looks at recruitment, retention and succession planning. The ideas below are a good starting point for putting such a strategy together.

## Volunteer Recruitment

CTA have identified key considerations that hold particular relevance to increasing the capacity and numbers of volunteers working on the ground to support community transport providers. The following steps can help you to recruit the right type of volunteer to suit your organisation:

### **Step one: Define what is unique and attractive about your organisation**

In a world of high competition for volunteers, it's important to identify what's attractive about your organisation. Providing a unique and enjoyable volunteering experience will encourage volunteer recruitment and retention. It is important to carefully frame the language you use to appeal to a broad scope of volunteers. 'Come and drive a minibus' whilst literally accurate and an important part of your recruitment, may not be the best way to engage potential volunteers. Rather, it's important to think about what it is that makes the opportunity to work for you unique. For example:

- ✓ Be a part of an organisation that makes a difference in your community!
- ✓ Help us fight loneliness and isolation!
- ✓ Volunteer for us and help empower local people!
- ✓ Work with other people who also believe that everyone should be able to get where they need to go.

These are all attractive propositions that can connect with the volunteers you're trying to recruit. Think about what makes you passionate about working in community transport, and whether this could make potential volunteers passionate about it too. For instance;

- ✓ A great way to meet new people and build lasting friendships
- ✓ Gain a greater understanding and learning about the organisation and its services users
- ✓ Potential to upskill and undergo training e.g. MiDAS training
- ✓ Be part of a wider community that champions accessibility and social inclusion of our most vulnerable groups

### **Step two: Build a profile of the sort of volunteers you want to target**

Once you've got a clear idea of how you want to sell volunteering opportunities at your organisation, it's important to get a handle on the sorts of people you want to volunteer, matching the capacity and opportunities of your organisation to the skills and interests of your potential volunteers. This ensures that you get the right people for the role and that volunteers feel valued because they have a clear place in your plans which, naturally, increases their confidence and also makes it more likely that they will volunteer over a longer period of time.

As well as this, having an idea of the sorts of volunteers you're looking for can help you with the practicalities around your recruitment, helping you understand where you should recruit, and what sorts of messages you should be using.

Here are some considerations to make while creating and defining your volunteer recruitment strategy:

- How many volunteers do you need?
- What do you need them to do?
- Where do they live? How old are they?
- What are their hobbies, their likes, dislikes etc.?
- Why do they want to volunteer?

It might even be worth thinking about who these volunteers are in more detail, and building up an example profile of potential volunteers. Do you want to recruit someone like Carol; age 21, a student of the local university who likes working with people and wants to make a difference in her community? Or a Chris; age 60, recently retired, who like being out and about and wants to carry on being active in retirement? This could help you focus your recruitment: if you know that Carol is a student at the local university, you have a better idea of where to advertise; if she likes working with people and wants to make a difference, you have a better idea of what about your outreach could resonate with her.

Further on in this guide, we've looked at different streams of potential volunteers who you could build your volunteering strategy around.

### **Step three: Ensure your volunteer publicity materials are up to date**

Once you know what sort of things you want to say in your recruitment, it's vital that your volunteering publicity/marketing materials and website are fully up to date.

Publicity materials can come in numerous different forms – you could design and print flyers and posters to put up or hand out in areas around your community, have an active presence on social media, put adverts in newspapers and other local publications, introduce yourselves to local universities or businesses; you know what will reach your community the best.

However you publicise yourselves, make sure all your materials:

- Are catching and engaging
- Clearly showcase the benefits of volunteering with your organisation
- Let people know the difference their time volunteering will make
- Introduce what volunteering opportunities are available
- Give people a clear call to action for how they can find out more and get involved.

## Where could you look for volunteers?

In addition to the above steps, CTA have identified some key themes that are particularly relevant to community transport providers who have successfully recruited volunteers in the past. When it comes to looking at step two above, the following themes could give you an idea of some of the people you might want to target your recruitment towards.

- **Theme 1** People who have appropriate driving/trustee qualifications/experience and have time to volunteer
- **Theme 2** People who are given time to volunteer e.g. organisations enabling staff to volunteer as part of their corporate social responsibility policy
- **Theme 3** Specifically targeting young people who may well have spare time to give to their local CT operator.

### Theme 1 – People who have appropriate driving/trustee qualifications/experience and have time to volunteer

#### Engaging with the ex-armed forces community

There is undoubtedly an opportunity to recruit more people into the CT sector who have appropriate driving/trustee qualifications and who have the experience and available time to volunteer. One example of this is from the ex-armed forces community. It has long been viewed that ex-armed forces veterans could well be an un-tapped resource in terms of volunteers and in particular, volunteer drivers. Working with organisations who support veterans such as LINKS (Llanelli mental health charity), through their Combined Forces Project in South Wales could give you an opportunity to reach new people and demonstrate how volunteering with you can help them continue to serve their community and improve people's lives. As most CT volunteer drivers tend to be male and most veterans tend to be male, there is a natural dovetail which could benefit both veterans and community transport groups.

Head over to [links.uk.net/our-work/](https://links.uk.net/our-work/) for more information

#### Time Banking

An increasingly popular way of encouraging involvement by volunteers over the last few years is the concept of Time Banking. In a recent survey by Tempo Time Credits, 59% of Time Credit members had never or rarely volunteered before earning time credits. Time Banking provides opportunities to build a two-way relationship that is mutually beneficial to the volunteer and the community transport provider. For every hour an individual gives to their community (sometimes known as 'time in') they will receive one time credit in return ('time out'). People who take part in Time Banking projects generally tend to be older people who have more time available to them because of a number of reasons, including retirement. An added benefit of this is that older people are more

likely have the D1 entitlement on their driving licence. It's also a community of people who are passionate about, and experienced in, volunteering, so you know you'll be reaching people who have an active interest in getting involved and making a difference.

For more information on time banking, take a look at the website of Time Banking UK the national membership body for time banks: [timebanking.org/](http://timebanking.org/)

## **Theme 2 – People who are given time to volunteer e.g. organisations enabling staff to volunteer as part of their corporate social responsibility policy**

One of the best ways to encourage volunteering in the community by private sector companies and businesses is to link into their corporate social responsibility agenda. It is possible for CTO's to build mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses without the need for third party brokerage; however, success is more likely to be achieved via the brokerage support of an agency.

It is beneficial for your organisation to partner with a business that encourage their employees to give time to supporting voluntary sector organisations and good causes. This can range from one-off volunteering days where time is given to support a specific goal or offer expertise, such as social media, design, accounting or business planning. It is worth exploring if there are businesses in your area, ideally from transport the industry (but not limited to) who would be a good fit with the aims, goals and mission of the community transport sector and to broker mutually beneficially partnerships which bring in extra volunteer capacity to help deliver existing and new community transport services.

Links with bus industry, haulage, parcel delivery e.g. UPS and home grocery delivery companies e.g. Tesco could prove very beneficial in terms of bringing in extra volunteer support for the sector. The advantage of building a volunteer recruitment relationship with an organisation(s) of this type is that employees volunteering their time are very likely to have the necessary driving qualification needed to deliver CT services.

## **Theme 3 – Specifically targeting young people who may well have spare time to give to their local CT operator**

### **Young people**

Attracting younger people into the CT sector is vital for the long-term sustainability and delivery of community transport services. Traditionally, it has been a difficult to attract and retain young volunteers within the sector. This has been the case for a number of reasons including the general public perception that the CT sector is about supporting older and disabled people and, as a result, some potential young volunteers can be attracted to other, more age specific opportunities. However, it is often the case that when young people do volunteer within the CT sector, the

feedback is that they find volunteering both individually rewarding and relevant to what they would like to do in the future.

Perhaps the most important thing to ask young people in respect to volunteering for their local CT operator is 'how would you like to be involved'? Giving young people a say, shows you respect their opinion and want to listen to them. Getting them involved in co-producing their volunteering role can give young people a real sense of ownership and create a lasting connection with the organisation. Research has proven that volunteer roles created in this way tend to lead to the volunteer enjoying the role greatly and volunteering for longer. This is sometimes known as 'Active Citizenship'.

Young people have a range of skills, talents and abilities. Technology, for example, can often be a way of enticing some of them to give their time, possibly in some cases, instead of driving or back office roles. Volunteering opportunities linked to giving time to develop a social media platform, develop a website or designing a newsletter could have mutual benefits for the young volunteer and your organisation.

There are many ways to target and find young volunteers. Use of your local Volunteer Centre can help. Local Volunteer Centres can help organisations develop quality volunteering opportunities for young people and can recruit and place young people into these opportunities.

In order to take the first step in the recruitment of young volunteers, best practice suggests that organisations should generally be contacted that engage young people. These include:

- Universities
- Colleges
- Youth networks/forums
- Job centres
- Social Services
- County Voluntary Councils

## **Students**

Students have the potential to make a significant contribution to the CT sector in terms of boosting volunteer numbers and supporting local CT schemes. University students specifically could prove fruitful to target with a volunteer recruitment campaign for a number of reasons including:

- Available spare time (dependent on course and other commitments)
- When they reach 21 years old they will be able to drive a minibus on a voluntary basis (assuming they have a driving licence)
- Some individuals may already drive a university minibus for sports/social events

It would be ideal to speak to individual universities students union representatives to arrange suitable times where CTO's can speak to students about volunteering opportunities. These could

include exhibitions and events such as fresher's fairs and career events which could prove ideal volunteer recruitment opportunities. Additionally, it is without doubt worth exploring educational institutions which offer courses that are particularly relevant to transport, in one guise or another, where young people can gain practical experience as part of their course. For example, this might take the form of a placement which could take place at a local CTO.

It is also important to consider a CTO's existing volunteer publicity materials. Ask the question: does our publicity appeal to younger people? Often, volunteer materials are geared towards older people which can be off-putting to younger people.

## More information

There is a wealth of resources available to help your organisation recruit and retain volunteers, some of the websites we recommend are;

- England [ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/consultancy/volunteering-consultancy](https://ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/consultancy/volunteering-consultancy)
- Scotland [scvo.org.uk/support/running-your-organisation/staff-volunteers/volunteers](https://scvo.org.uk/support/running-your-organisation/staff-volunteers/volunteers)
- Wales [wcva.cymru/volunteering/](https://wcva.cymru/volunteering/)
- Northern Ireland [nicva.org/](https://nicva.org/)

You can also find our other resources related to volunteering, including a guide on retaining volunteers, at [ctauk.org/advice-resources/volunteering](https://ctauk.org/advice-resources/volunteering).

And if you need any more support on how to recruit, retain or manage your volunteers, you can contact the CTA advice team at [advice@ctauk.org](mailto:advice@ctauk.org).

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## Connecting Communities in Wales

This guide was put together as part of the Connecting Communities in Wales project run by the Community Transport Association. The project is funded through the Welsh Government Rural Communities Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government, and aims to support community transport in Wales through creating new partnerships, bringing funding into the sector and creating new transport networks.

**You can find out more about Connecting Communities in Wales at [ctauk.org/CCIW](https://ctauk.org/CCIW).**