

Things to find out about in Volunteering venues

Seminar groups have suggested the following items be built into a proforma for visiting volunteering venues:

What activities are available?

- *What training opportunities or qualifications do you offer that help volunteers to move on to paid employment? Have your volunteers moved on to other things?*
- *What is the choice of volunteering opportunities on offer? What variety of tasks would the person be likely to do? What hours? Are working practices flexible?*
- *Are volunteers valued? What would be of value to the organisation?*
- *What social activities are available outside work time?*
- *What breaks, refreshments and catering arrangements are available? Is there comfortable seating and secure storage for belongings?*
- *Is this a long-term or short-term opportunity? Do volunteers have to be reliable?*
- *How many possible venues and placements are feasible*

What support arrangements are in place?

- *Are there regular volunteer meetings or other ways our voice is heard?*
- *What is the volunteer turnover? Have any of the volunteers had bad experiences such as being taken for granted or exploited? Complaints policy?*
- *Could we speak to some volunteers to find out what they get out of it? What rewards and enjoyment do people get from volunteering?*
- *Risks, health and safety issues. Complaints policy? Transport and access to the building and within it. Travel arrangements. Are signs and directions clear? Physical access. Would the person be covered by insurance?*
- *Are policies and procedures adhered to? Is there a 'volunteer contract'?*
- *Contact person's details - Phone numbers*
- *Atmosphere, attitudes, friendliness, enthusiasm and confidentiality among staff and other volunteers. First impressions – does it feel like people are respected?*
- *Induction arrangements, training and appraisal. Is there a trial period?*
- *Is disability or inclusion training provided to staff?*
- *Would there be a support system and supervision for the person? Is there a buddy system in place? Would sufficient support be on hand?*

What do I have to do to participate?

- *Is this just occupation, or do people here really believe in the importance of the volunteering activity?*
- *Are volunteer expenses paid and when? Are there any costs involved?*
- *Is an initial assessment carried out?*
- *Are references or criminal records checks required? What personal information is asked for?*
- *Expectations - is everyone expected to make tea, answer the phone etc?*
- *Is special clothing or other equipment needed?*
- *Dress code / are uniforms provided?*
- *What formal or informal rules exist? Does everyone here seem to be the same age, gender, etc? How would a different person be welcomed?*

Administration

- *Name and contact details of the person who completed this form.*
- *Date of the visit.*