

Volunteering in the Youth Justice System Guidance

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Introduction

One of the greatest strengths of an organisation is its workforce diversity. Diversity of thought, skill, decision making and experience can mean the difference between simply “getting by” and thriving.

Our volunteers deliver an enormous contribution to the Youth Justice System, and their ability to bring a different perspective and diversity of thought should not be underestimated. Over the course of my career I have seen numerous situations where the unique position of a volunteer has made the difference – including many times when their additional independence has given them an added ability to engage a child or young adult.

Of course, the best volunteers operate with comprehensive support, training and involvement from Youth Justice Professionals. This guide sets out how to recruit, train and value volunteers and covers issues such as confidentiality and expenses as well as resolving issues, so please use it, and please do feedback and let us know what more we can do to support a thriving community of volunteers in Youth Justice.

Keith Fraser (Chair of the Youth Justice Board)

Aim of the Guidance

This guidance outlines how Youth Justice Services can recruit, train, support and manage volunteers. It describes:

- The benefits that volunteers bring
- The types of role they can fill
- How to plan and manage a volunteer programme

This guidance contains examples of how volunteers support the work of Youth Justice Services. It contains information that may be useful when recruiting, supporting and managing volunteers and links to practice examples and templates that can be utilised to support this work. It is acknowledged that services have individual needs and not every example will be appropriate for every service but provides guidance on key areas that services should consider and ideas to inspire practice.

What do Volunteers Bring to the Youth Justice System?

Volunteer input in the youth justice system has advantages for:

- Children who have offended (or who are at risk of doing so) and their families
- The community
- People who are harmed by crime
- The youth justice system as a whole

Children and their Families

Children who have input from a volunteer may appreciate them giving up their time, which in turn can change the dynamic of the relationship. In some circumstances this may increase the child's receptiveness to engage and provide them with a positive adult role model.

Local volunteers can help the child to feel less alienated from their community, and to understand the consequences of their actions on others in their area. Volunteers can help to raise awareness of or support opportunities for the child to reintegrate into their local community, which can in turn promote desistance and identity shift. Volunteers can also play an important part in the work youth justice practitioners undertake with the wider family.

The Community

Volunteers take back into the community what they learn about issues relating to youth crime and children. This can influence and inform others and lead to greater public confidence in the youth justice system.

Person / People Harmed

Volunteer community panel members can help people who have been harmed by youth crime to move on and rebuild their lives. Typically, this is through their involvement in referral order panels. Panels should hear the voice of, and where appropriate support the input of the person or people harmed by crime. Restorative Justice can take various forms and more detail can be found on the YJB resource hub.

Youth Justice System

Having a volunteer programme can help to diversify services and can provide an extra resource in addition to the work that paid staff do. Volunteer programmes can increase formal recruitment to the workforce, by introducing the system and the opportunities it offers to individuals who might be less likely to be engaged by traditional recruitment routes.

Who Can Volunteer in the Youth Justice System?

Volunteers should be diverse and representative of the local community. The selection criteria are based on personal qualities and skills rather than professional qualifications. Training will form an integral and compulsory part of the recruitment process to ensure that volunteers are equipped with the appropriate skills.

Youth Justice Services must demonstrate a commitment to equal opportunities and care should be taken to ensure that opportunities for participation in volunteering are open to all, regardless of age, ethnic or racial origin, gender, sexual orientation, social background, religion, disability or any other factor.

We are also aware that some areas have a high proportion of BAME children, and each Youth Justice Service should have a clear recruitment strategy which actively seeks to recruit volunteers who reflect the demographic profile of the local population.

Age

The minimum age requirement is 18 years old. Beyond this the aim should be to recruit a diverse pool of volunteers encompassing a range of ages and experience.

Disability

Volunteers are found across the spectrum of disabilities, for example mental health, learning disability, and visually impaired.

People in Receipt of Benefits

Individuals in receipt of benefits can volunteer as many hours as they want each week and their benefits won't be affected. However, depending on the benefits they receive, there are some considerations. These are outlined in the following guidance [Click Here](#)

People with Criminal Convictions

There are legal restrictions under safeguarding legislation on who can work with children and adults at risk. Youth Justice Services have a legal responsibility to;

- Make sure that volunteers are suitable to work with children and adults at risk
- Request appropriate checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service where the role is eligible

Please refer to further guidance in the 'Screening' section (page 10).

Refugee and Asylum Seekers

Volunteering can be undertaken at any stage of the asylum process, although there are a number of considerations. These are set out in home office guidance

Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV)

Organizations in the private and public sectors can and do encourage their own staff to volunteer in their own time or provide opportunities for staff to volunteer in work time (e.g. by allowing volunteering leave). This is usually referred to as employer supported volunteering or ESV for short. More information can be found on the [NCVO \(Championing Voluntary Action\) Website](#).

How Can Volunteers Contribute to the Youth Justice System?

Some of the most common roles volunteers fill in the Youth Justice System are;

Volunteer Community Panel Member

Volunteer community panel members are involved in agreeing the programme of activities for a child who has received a Referral Order. It is a statutory requirement that panels are facilitated by volunteers. Please refer to [Referral Order Guidance](#) for more information.

One to One Support

Youth Justice Services utilise support from volunteers to support with a range of one to one support for children. This includes mentoring schemes, where a volunteer acts in the capacity of a mentor, providing the child with a positive role model, helps to provide support and engages the child in activities to develop their skills and positive interests.

Group Work Programmes

Volunteers can support with the delivery of group based programmes or interventions alongside Youth Justice Practitioners.

Reparation Supervisor

Volunteers can support supervising and helping children on a one-to-one and group basis as they carry out Reparative activities or projects such as painting and gardening.

Appropriate Adult

Volunteers can support in the role of appropriate adult, ensuring that children detained in police custody understand their rights and entitlements and that police procedures are followed.

Independent Monitoring Board Volunteer

Volunteers on independent monitoring boards visit secure establishments and meet with the Children to help monitor different aspects of their life in custody, such as living conditions and staff activity. They identify concerns and issues, discuss these at board meetings and recommend changes.

The Youth Justice Board Resource Hub contains some examples of how different Youth Justice Services utilise volunteers which can be viewed [here](#)

Volunteering in youth offending teams

There are health and safety considerations when thinking about volunteer input. More detail of key considerations about this are included in the health and safety section of this document see page 19.

Running a Volunteer Programme: The Planning Stage

Before starting to operate a volunteer programme, it is important to:

- Identify resource implications
- Decide how the programme will be managed
- Consult with other members of the Youth Justice Service
- Create volunteer task descriptions

Identify Resource Implications

Each Youth Justice Service needs to work out the costs associated with running its volunteer programme, in order to create a budget and identify funding and resources.

Running a volunteer programme requires the commitment of:

- Staff and management time
- Money for materials (for advertising and the equipment to carry out the role)
- Money for DBS checks
- Time and activities to make the volunteer feel valued
- Money to cover out-of-pocket expenses

Allocate Responsibility for Volunteer Tasks

It is essential that staff time is dedicated to managing a volunteer programme. Depending on the size and needs of the Youth Justice Service, this would usually involve:

- A member of the senior management team, who provides a strategic overview
- A practitioner, who acts as lead or coordinator for the programme

Senior management team member

This person is responsible for:

- Implementing the volunteer policy

- Agreeing resources
- Developing a clear understanding of roles and expectations
- Dealing with problems of access and communication
- Maintaining the organisation's commitment to volunteering

Volunteer programme coordinator/ lead

This practitioner has responsibility for:

- Co-ordinating all aspects of the programme
- Overseeing volunteer recruitment, induction, support, supervision, deployment, and training (within the guidelines of the volunteer policy: see page 7).

The co-ordinator's own training and development should also be considered.

Consultation

It is important in the planning stage to consult as widely as possible with people from all levels of the Youth Justice Service or secure establishment. Not everyone will know about volunteers and the contribution they can make: an effective consultation can help to ensure that people feel included, have more understanding of volunteers, are more willing to work with them, have more ownership of the policy, and want to make volunteer involvement a success.

A consultation can be undertaken in many different ways, such as through a questionnaire, participatory workshops, or by establishing an advisory group. It should ask people to think about:

- The strengths and areas of development of any current volunteer work (if applicable)
- What practical tasks volunteers might do to support practitioners?
- Whether these tasks substitute or compliment the work of practitioners
- What volunteers want and expect
- What resources are available to make the programme a success?

Create Volunteer Task Descriptions

A detailed and concise task description should be created for each role. Task descriptions are similar to role profiles or job descriptions but use different terminology to avoid appearing like a contract of employment. It is important to avoid creating formal contracts that give volunteers employment status, and so entitlement to employment rights, such as a claim against unfair dismissal, since this can cause legal complications. However, it is beneficial to both sides to have detailed task descriptions in place.

Task descriptions are an important tool, as they:

- Make clear to the volunteer what they are contributing to, the part they play and the boundaries of their activity.
- Gives the volunteer co-ordinator a clear framework for recruiting volunteers.

The consultation results should form the basis of the task descriptions and be used to create a range of relevant and structured volunteer roles, which can be advertised. At the same time, any current volunteer work can be assessed against these descriptions.

As a minimum it is recommended that each task description should contain the following information:

- Description of the project the volunteer will be working on
- Title of the role
- Purpose of the role
- Contribution of time required, and how often
- Location of the role
- Tasks the volunteer will be required to carry out
- Skills, experience, knowledge and attributes needed
- Training provided
- Point of contact/support

A note should also be made (for internal use only) of the practical considerations the role holds for the YOT or secure establishment, such as:

- Is equipment needed?
- When will it be available?
- When will the project be ready for the volunteer?
- Is the induction programme ready?
- When will supervision be available?

The Youth Justice Board Resource Hub contains examples of volunteer task descriptions. Which can be accessed using the following links:

[Volunteer Mentor Person Specification & Job Description](#)

[Volunteer Description](#)

[Volunteer Task Description Template](#)

What is a Volunteer Policy?

A volunteer policy is a written statement expressing the YOT's or secure establishments commitment to their volunteer programme and volunteers. Volunteer policies;

- Provide a framework for planning, procedures and practices
- Demonstrate that care and thought has gone into involving volunteers
- State commitment towards effective practice
- Provide consistency and fairness
- Help volunteers, staff, managers and members of management boards to understand why volunteers are involved and the roles they will fill.

Creating and Circulating the Volunteer Policy

The volunteer policy needs to be developed at a senior level after the planning and consultation stages (see page 5). It should be short, accessible and written in clear language, outlining the main commitments and referring to other relevant policies (such as the Youth Justice Service's/ Secure Establishment's health and safety policy).

Once the volunteer policy has been created it should be shared (for example, through a meeting, relevant newsletters or briefings), to make sure that as many people as possible are aware of it and understand how it will be implemented. Children, their families and others who come into contact with the YOT or secure establishment should be informed about it, so they understand the role volunteers play in service delivery. All

staff and any existing volunteers should receive copies and it should be included in all induction packs.

What Should the Volunteer Policy Contain?

While each policy reflects the needs of the individual Youth Justice Service or Secure Establishment, each one should start with a 'statement of intent', setting out:

- Why the YOT or secure establishment wishes to involve volunteers
- How they will contribute to the organisation
- How they will be valued

This should be followed by an 'aims and principles' section, setting out the commitment the organisation will make to volunteers and outlining how paid staff will relate to volunteers.

The volunteer policy should go on to cover the following areas:

- Recruitment, selection and screening
- Induction and training
- Support and supervision
- Expenses
- Health and safety and insurance
- Confidentiality and data protection
- Resolving problems

The Youth Justice Board Resource Hub contains examples of volunteer policy which can be found [here](#)

Recruitment, Selection and Screening

The volunteer policy should contain a statement outlining the selection process, and how this will work, for example whether posts will be advertised, if a registration/ expression of interest form will be used, how meetings with the prospective volunteer will be undertaken, when references should be sought, and the role of the equal opportunities and diversity policy.

Recruitment should only begin after the planning and consultation stages have been completed, and the task descriptions finalised. A formal process of recruitment has many advantages, such as:

- Offering consistency
- Improving the image of volunteering
- Helping to match skills to roles
- Providing structure and promoting effective practice
- Fulfilling equal opportunity and diversity guidelines

The recruitment and selection process should reflect the size and needs of the organisation and the opportunities available, and address:

How volunteering opportunities will be promoted

Where you place adverts to reach a wide audience. For example, your own website, volunteer partnership website, social media:

- How public enquiries about volunteering will be dealt with
- Registration forms

- Meeting the prospective volunteer
- References
- Screening
- How to accept or decline prospective volunteers

More information on each of these areas is given below. Other considerations include whether staff involved in the recruitment and selection of volunteers may need training to such as safer recruitment training to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to undertake this process.

Additionally, there is specific statutory guidance for the recruitment and selection of panel volunteers and Referral Orders. See [Click Here](#) for more information.

Promoting Volunteering Opportunities

The aim should be to involve volunteers who reflect the diversity of the local community. You will need to consider where you place adverts to reach a wide and diverse audience and when you will advertise and recruit. Ways of promoting the volunteer programme include:

- Information events
- Advertising on your organisation's website
- Collaborating with local Volunteer Bureau/ Centre/ Partnership, which may place adverts on their websites
- Advertising in the local press, radio, and social media.
- Contacting local employers who operate an ESV scheme
- Putting posters and leaflets in community centres, supermarkets, local shops, libraries, cafes, clubs, schools, colleges, gyms, and dentists' and doctors' surgeries
- Using local authority websites and newsletters
- Ensuring that information is accessible to all groups in the community

Dealing with Enquiries

Enquiries about the possibility of volunteering need to be dealt with efficiently, so that prospective volunteers have clear information about the type of work available, and about the process for registering interest and selection of volunteers. The volunteer coordinator should:

- Ensure that all staff are familiar with the volunteering opportunities available
- Have systems in place to deal with enquiries
- Direct individuals to wider volunteer opportunities (for example through local volunteer bureaus, centres or partnerships) if they express an interest but there are no current opportunities available in the Youth Justice Service.
- Have a concise information pack that can be sent out, which includes details about the organisation, the task description, what volunteers can expect from the organisation, explaining the process that needs to be followed (see example on YJB resource hub)
- Some Youth Justice Services hold information events for volunteers where they can find out more information about the volunteer role and ask questions before proceeding with the formal process to become a volunteer

[Volunteer Recruitment Leaflet](#)

Registration/ Expression of Interest Form

Registration/ expression of interest forms should be short, available in a range of formats, and include reassurance that the information given will be treated in confidence and offer the opportunity to complete the application verbally instead of in writing for those who may need an alternative format. These forms should not be referred to as an application form due to employment law and the need to be clear that this is a volunteer role. It should ask for:

- Name, address and telephone number(s)
- Which volunteer role they are interested in
- How much time the prospective volunteer can offer/ commit to
- His or her skills, experience and knowledge
- Contact details for two references (with an explanation of who may be suitable; it is important to remember that candidates may not have been in recent paid employment: in this case a referee who has known the candidate for at least two years could be selected such as a tutor, club or society leader, religious representative, probation officer, or long-term friend).

The form can also include an equal opportunity monitoring section, as an optional extra.

The Youth Justice Board Resource hub has example templates of registration/ expression of interest forms available. Which can be accessed using the link below [here](#)

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

The volunteering policy should outline how the YOT's or secure establishment's equal opportunity and diversity policy applies to the recruitment and management of volunteers, and the policies and practices required of any Volunteer Centre Service, bureau, or partnership organisation providing volunteers.

Care should be taken that equality of opportunity is considered when designing and delivering recruitment, deployment, training and management of volunteers; and diversity expands the principles of equal opportunities to consider how to recruit and retain volunteers from diverse backgrounds, and how to engage on an equal basis with them. The recruitment programme should be designed in such a way as to recruit a diversity of individuals, who are representative of the local community.

Meeting with the Prospective Volunteer

Meeting the volunteer to explore their suitability for the role, should be more informal than a job interview, and reflect the volunteering role being applied for. Note that caution should be given to calling these interviews due to employment law. Time should be set aside for the process and notes of factual information should be retained (in line with the organisations data protection procedures).

The meeting should:

- Be led by two members of staff from the Youth Justice Service
- Be an informal, two-way process that enables both sides to get to know each other
- Give an overview of the YJS or secure establishment and its role within the youth justice system, and outline how and why it involves volunteers
- Describe the context in which the volunteer would be working, and the pros and cons of volunteering for the youth justice system

- Establish why they want to volunteer and what they can bring to the role
- Clarify the role and time commitment, and identify the skills, knowledge and experience needed
- Identify the support, recognition and expenses available
- Find out what they know about children who offend
- Allow the candidate to ask questions and discuss support needs
- Outline any further selection activities and screening processes, and describe the induction and training requirements.

If it is clear the prospective volunteer is suitable ask if he or she also wants to proceed, and outline the next steps. Alternatively, if more time is needed for reflection, give a deadline for the decision.

If the person is unsuitable, inform them, giving the reasons. Their desire to volunteer may be of benefit to another organisation, and they should be directed to their local volunteer bureau, centre or partnership.

Accepting or Declining Prospective Volunteers

While some prospective volunteers are rejected at the meeting stage others, for legitimate reasons, may be found unsuitable after references and/or screening, and will not be invited onto the training/ induction programme. They may not have the right skills and attributes for the task, which may create problems in the future for both themselves and the Youth Justice Service or secure establishment; they may also present the organisation with a risk in relation to its duty of care to others.

A letter should be sent informing them that the role would not be the most suitable for them. They too should be provided with the local volunteer centre contact, as their desire to volunteer may be beneficial to others. It is important to offer them an opportunity to receive feedback on the decision if they request it.

References

References offer more insight into the prospective volunteer. A reference confirms who they are, identifies their strengths, skills, and any safeguarding concerns or issues that make them unsuitable for the volunteer role.

The procedures in place for dealing with employee references should be followed. Only essential information should be sought, and a useful way is to send the referee a form outlining the volunteer task description and asking for comments on the person's character and skills to fulfil the role. It is recommended that referees are contacted to confirm the details provided in the written reference.

Sometimes it may not be possible to acquire references, for example in the case of a recently arrived asylum seeker. In this instance they may be accepted as a volunteer but asked to perform the role within a risk assessment framework until they are better known, for instance, working in group activities only.

Security and screening DBS

The volunteer policy should outline how the Youth Justice Service or secure establishment will reduce the risk of involving volunteers who are unsuitable to work with vulnerable children or adults. It should state the circumstances in which volunteers should be screened, how they will be informed of the need for a disclosure, and how the information disclosed will be used. It should also identify situations in which individuals with section 4 offences against children would be excluded from volunteering; and

include how volunteers from overseas, including refugees and asylum seekers, should be checked.

All volunteering roles that involve having direct contact with children or vulnerable adults, require an enhanced DBS check before they start. Full Data Barring Service checks will need to be carried out, and anyone applying to be a volunteer panel member must declare any convictions (whether 'spent' or 'unspent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974), cautions, reprimands or final warnings.

For guidance on DBS checks [click here](#). DBS checks should be renewed in accordance with guidelines (minimum of every 3 years for roles involving children and vulnerable adults) It is important to be aware that DBS requirements differ when a person has lived abroad within the last 5 years and a certificate of good conduct is required from the country that they were living in.

It is important to make potential volunteers aware of this as it can significantly hold up the process especially for countries where there are no reciprocal arrangements in place. For further information is available for Criminal record checks for overseas applicant [here](#) & for DBS checks for asylum seekers [here](#).

Sexual offences, offences against children or a criminal conviction within the last two years will render a person unsuitable.

Otherwise, where the applicant can demonstrate that he or she does not present a re-offending risk, previous offending need not necessarily be a bar to recruitment and is a matter for the YOT manager's discretion following a risk assessment process. A risk assessment template is included on the Youth Justice Resource Hub available [here](#)

In making decisions attention should be paid to previous convictions for drugs-related offences, violent offences, and other offences of a serious nature and evidence of recent persistent offending.

Where there is any doubt as to how the individual's previous offending may affect his or her suitability, they should not be accepted as a volunteer; the YOT manager should decline, giving an explanation of the reasons and the steps the applicant might take to enable a successful future application.

Driving

If your volunteer is driving in connection with their volunteering role, you may need to consider checking driving documentation to ensure that they are covered for volunteering. For example;

- Does their insurance cover them for volunteering
- Do they have a valid MOT
- Do they have points on their licence?
- What is your policy if the person has points on their licence?
- Does your own organisation's insurance policy cover volunteers who have points on their licence?

Checks of driving licence and insurance cover for volunteering, MOT and V5 are typically standard checks for volunteers, along with driver declarations. It is important that timescales are in place for reviewing such checks.

Induction and training

The volunteer policy should set out the Youth Justice Service's commitment to induction and training and how these will be welcoming, comprehensive, clarify working practices and routines, and ensure volunteers are able to fulfil their roles safely and effectively.

Induction

An induction programme is essential for all volunteers, whatever their experience of the Youth Justice System and the volunteering role. It also acts as the final stage in the selection process.

The induction programme should:

- Be welcoming and comprehensive
- Clarify working practices and routines
- Ensure volunteers are able to work safely and effectively
- Convey a realistic picture of volunteering in the youth justice system, to enable volunteers to make an informed decision about whether they still wish to volunteer.

The induction programme should be well-paced, but not overwhelming, and take place over a number of days or weeks. It may include current volunteers and members of staff who provide peer support/ information. The programme should draw on the contents of the volunteer policy and build on any information provided in the information pack and interview. The following topics should be covered;

Organisational information

- Details about the Youth Justice Service, its role in the youth justice system and its relationship with other agencies.
- Information about volunteering in the youth justice system, including security issues and the principles to be adhered to.
- Shadowing opportunities - Court, panels, group work sessions, reparation etc.

Volunteering within the YOT or secure establishment

- Details of the contribution volunteers currently make to the youth justice system
- The organisation's volunteer policy and its commitment to, and recognition of volunteers
- The procedures for support and supervision
- How the specific volunteer project contributes to the aims of the Youth Justice Service or secure establishment.

Volunteering in practice

- The task description and its practical application.
- Training requirements and opportunities
- Health and safety and risk management policies and procedures, emergency contact information
- Effective practice guidelines when volunteering with young people.
- Insurance details
- Confidentiality and Information Governance policy
- How expenses can be claimed
- How problems and complaints are resolved
- Reference to other relevant policies, e.g smoking, substance misuse, use of social media etc

Volunteers should be given a copy of the volunteer handbook, and a volunteer agreement to sign at the end of the induction period. The Youth Justice Board

Resource Hub has examples which may be useful for services when planning induction which can be accessed using the links below:

[Stoke-on-Trent Confidentiality Statement](#)

[Nottingham Confidentiality Statement and Policy](#)

[Volunteer recruitment and ongoing learning and support schedule](#)

[Induction checklist example](#)

Volunteer handbook

Youth Justice Service's and secure establishments are encouraged to put together a tailored volunteer handbook, containing everything the volunteer needs to know (all of which should have been covered, or referred to, during the process of recruitment and induction). It should include copies of any written policies, particularly the volunteer policy, health and safety policy, problem-solving and complaints procedure, and information about expenses.

The Youth Justice Board Resource Hub has an example of a volunteer handbook which may be useful for services.

[Volunteer handbook template](#)

[Volunteer agreement/ contract / code of conduct](#)

If at the end of the induction period both the Youth Justice Service or secure establishment and the volunteer decide they want to continue, both sides should sign a volunteer agreement. This document is a brief and clear description of the arrangement between the organisation and the volunteer, and what they can expect of each other. It is not a contract, and so should not be worded like a contract of employment; it is an expression of hopes and intentions, rather than rights and obligations.

The agreement should reflect the contents of the volunteer policy and include a copy of the relevant task description. In covering expectations reference should be made to volunteer codes of conduct.

The Youth Justice Board contains examples of the above which may be useful for services. Which can be accessed using the links below:

[Volunteer Agreements](#)

[Referral Order Contracts](#)

[Volunteer code of conduct](#)

Induction Training

All volunteers should receive training as part of the induction process and before they commence their role. The content of training will be dependent on the role the volunteer is undertaking in the service but should build on the content of the induction programme. A variety of methods can be used to deliver training, as detailed below.

Safeguarding Training

It is important that all volunteers can access safeguarding training before they can commence their role. This should cover the basics of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, providing the volunteers with the knowledge and understanding of how to identify a safeguarding concern and what to do in that circumstance.

Restorative Panel Member Training Programme

A Restorative Panel Member Training Programme has been developed through a collaboration between Youth Justice Service restorative justice practitioners, the YJB and Restorative Justice Council. This is available via the Youth Justice Institute Website. The training is based on the YJB's vision for a youth justice system that sees children as children treats them fairly and helps them to build on their own strengths. It dovetails with the current Referral Order Guidance (YJB 2018).

The training is aimed for delivery to community panel volunteers and Youth Justice staff involved with Referral Order panels. The course contains content for a restorative panel's training course, which combines both the old two-day YJB panel matters administration training and three-day YJB restorative justice facilitator training into one four-day course.

The training meets the requirements of the Restorative Justice Council code of practice for trainings which stipulates a minimum of 20 hours face to face training involving skills practice and covers the range of skills in the Skills for justice National Occupational Standards for Restorative Justice NOS 2010.

The course can be delivered in four consecutive days, or scattered over several weeks or weekends, which has the benefit of allowing trainees to process the material and do reading and homework exercises between sessions.

Skills for Justice Award's accreditation for this course is available to all YOTs and individual panel members (for a small fee) through the [Youth Justice Institute](#). This is optional. Volunteer panel members would need to work through the introductory resource, Exploring Youth Justice and complete a computer marked assignment which assesses the learning from that resource and from attending this course. Further information about the accreditation process can also be found on the website.

Opportunities for current panel members to have input into the initial training for new volunteers is encouraged and considered good practice.

Training for Appropriate Adults

In relation to training for appropriate adults, the National Appropriate Adult Network are a valuable source of support and have a training package that members can use available [here](#)

Ongoing learning and development

It is useful for volunteers to have a basic understanding of the following areas to support them in their role.

- Why children offend
- Child development
- Identity and change in adolescence
- The basics of effective communication
- Diversity awareness, including racial disparity (see resource of YJB Resource Hub)
- Exploitation
- Trauma informed practice
- Mental health, substance misuse, harmful sexual behaviour etc.

Racial Disparity Resource

When and how services choose to cover these topics will be led by the needs of the organization and resources available. A variety of options to consider are;

- Face to face training
- Virtual training sessions
- E learning
- Reading
- Workshops
- Good practice events
- Annual conferences
- Regular volunteer newsletters
- Sharing practice with peers

The Youth Justice Institute provides access to training resources to cover some of the above topics. Some of these are free and others can be purchased.

[Exploring Racial Disparity](#)

Ongoing learning and development opportunities should be offered throughout the volunteer's time with the service as part of a continuous, rolling training programme which supports development. This fits with ongoing support and supervision opportunities outlined below.

Professional development

Some volunteers may wish to develop careers within the youth justice system. The accreditation option is available for the panel members training programme. If possible, they should be encouraged to complete the Introduction to Youth Justice Course, which forms part of the National Qualifications Framework. From here, it is possible to progress to the Professional Certificate in Effective Practice (PCEP), and ultimately a foundation degree in youth justice.

Support, Supervision, Annual Review and Recognition

The volunteer policy should give information on the main point of contact for volunteers in the, the process of support and supervision, how often such sessions should occur, and the policies and practices required of any Volunteer Centre Service, bureaus or partnership organisations providing volunteers. Volunteers are not tied to the service in the same way as staff, and it is important to recognise that there will always be some turnover. High turnover, however, is time-consuming in terms of recruitment and training; and so, the service needs to ensure their approach and practice is as appealing to volunteers as possible.

Volunteers give freely of their time to perform essential tasks for the benefit of organisations, their staff and service users. For this to be a reciprocal arrangement volunteers need to be valued and recognised, getting something back for their commitment.

For the volunteer programme to be a positive experience for both sides, there needs to be:

- Commitment to the programme from all levels of the service
- A positive work environment.
- Practitioner recognition of the skills and knowledge volunteers contribute (see below)
- Clear processes and procedures for the volunteer's role, including appropriate training
- Practitioner commitment to working with volunteers

Support

Good support and supervision procedures regulate volunteer activity and help to avoid risk in response to the organisation's overall duty of care. A named individual should be responsible for support and supervision, which should be appropriate to the role, the needs of the volunteer, and whether they have been recruited directly or through a Volunteer Centre, bureau or partnership organisation. Peer support, possibly through a buddy system or volunteer meetings, offers additional encouragement and a chance to share experiences.

Supervision

Formal supervision meetings are an opportunity for a private conversation with each volunteer to discuss what is going well, what isn't, whether there are enough appropriate tasks, whether support is adequate, and the development of training. Volunteers should be encouraged to voice concerns early, so they can be dealt with effectively. Clear feedback should be given on both good and bad areas.

Some volunteering roles will not require such formal meetings, and other methods of giving and receiving feedback should be established, such as informal chats during an activity or regular phone calls.

A record of every volunteer's progress should be kept, as this may be needed later when providing references, dealing with problems, or asking a volunteer to leave the programme.

The Youth Justice Board Resource Hub contains a one to one supervision meeting template available [here](#)

Annual Review

Some Youth Justice Services offer an annual review for their volunteers as part of their learning and development offer. This can include an observation of the community panel members in one or more Referral Order Panels. This observation can then form the basis of the appraisal with other elements such as training attended in the previous 12 months, any personal development requests/needs, feedback from YOT staff, children or families would also be discussed as part of appraisal.

Recognising the contribution of volunteers

It is important to plan how volunteers will be valued. Just as their motivations for volunteering will be different, so a variety of ways to recognise their involvement should be available. These could include:

- A simple 'thank you'
- Mention in reports and publications – for example a regular volunteer newsletter.
- Inclusion in meetings and service development – for example Inclusion of Volunteers views in Inspection forum.
- Specific celebratory events – examples include annual summer social, Acknowledging input during volunteer's week and international RJ week
- Systems whereby volunteers can earn credits with the Council which they can use to access other Council services such as leisure, local discounts etc.

Establishing a practice of formally and informally recognising the valuable contribution they make to the organisation will contribute to successful retention of volunteers.

Expenses

The volunteer policy should state the Youth Justice Service or secure establishment's commitment to reimbursing volunteer expenses, together with a list of items that can be claimed.

Volunteers should be made aware of:

- What they can claim for
- How and when the claim should be made
- When the claim can be made
- What evidence they need to provide.

What can volunteers claim for?

No volunteer should incur costs because of volunteering. Basic travel costs to attend meetings and training days should be reimbursed by the Youth Justice Service. Rates will depend on local factors but should cover standard class public transport or the cost of petrol. Where childcare is an issue YOTs and prospective volunteers should work together to identify practical solutions.

Repayment against receipts of the following types of expenses is acceptable:

- Travel to and from the site where an activity is undertaken
- Travel during the course of volunteering
- Cost of protective or specialist clothing if needed

How and when should the claim be made?

Repayments should be made regularly using a claim form, and the transaction should be recorded following the organisation's usual systems. Repayment of actual expenses should not affect benefits. Only incurred expenses can be paid (i.e. payments cannot be made in advance). It is important not to pay for other items, or a flat rate for an activity that will result in the volunteer 'making a profit'. For example, if travel costs were £2, but a flat rate of £3 was paid, the extra £1 could suggest a contractual arrangement exists; it may be seen as income for income tax purposes; and it may also affect the volunteer's benefits.

Health and Safety and Insurance

The volunteer policy should state how the YOT or secure establishment will undertake their duty of care to volunteers, with reference to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Clear

links should be made to the YOT's or secure establishment's overall health and safety policy.

Duty of care

While the legal obligations are not as clear as they are for employees, the Youth Justice Service or Secure Establishment does have a 'duty of care' toward volunteers. This means that if a volunteer sustains an injury while undertaking an activity, the service may be liable. The service should therefore ensure that;

- They have 'due regard and concern' so as not to act in a way that will endanger the health and safety of themselves or others
- Appropriate risk assessments are in place
- That consideration is given to whether they have any medical conditions or needs that require consideration, especially if they are supporting physical activities such as reparation
- Reasonable adjustments are made in view of any health needs or disabilities
- Volunteers are never knowingly placed in a position of risk

Health and Safety Procedures

It is recommended that the same health and safety procedures are adopted for volunteers as for paid employees. Volunteers should be informed at induction:

- Which member of staff has responsibility for health and safety advice
- Health and safety rules, including emergency procedures
- Personal safety tips and conflict de-escalation; knowing where to sit in the room; location of panic buttons etc
- The guidelines to follow if they find themselves at risk
- How to report accidents and dangerous incidents
- Where fire alarms, extinguishers, fire exits and first-aiders can be found

It may be useful to provide volunteers with written information relating to health and safety and wellbeing as part of their induction.

Risk Assessments

Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 states that organisations have a statutory responsibility not to harm or damage the health of individuals through their involvement in activities. Depending on the activities the volunteer is involved in, the YOT or secure establishment may be obliged to carry out a written risk assessment to comply with this.

Risk assessments identify any hazard within a YOT's or secure establishment's activities, and assess the risk of harm that it might pose. Measures should then be put in place to control the risk. Risk assessments should always be carried out by those with knowledge of the Organisation's activities and working practices: this includes volunteers as well as employees.

Protocols for Home Visits

If volunteers are required to undertake home visits, a separate risk assessment should be undertaken to identify any concerns about potential risk and the appropriate measures to be taken. The supervisor should ensure that before a visit the volunteer:

- Has already had contact with the individual/family
- Checks records to see what is known about the home situation, and talks to staff and volunteers who have been to the home
- Knows the YOT's or secure establishment's procedure for dealing with potential difficulty
- Volunteer is provided with a mobile phone
- Informs practitioners of the name, address and time of the visit, mobile contact number and expected time of return, and lets them know when the visit is finished
- Knows only to enter the house if a member of the family or colleague is nearby, and keeps a door open if a child has to be interviewed alone in a room
- Is prepared to record all details of the visit
- Understands and knows how to finish the visit if a situation feels threatening

Insurance

The volunteer policy should outline when and how volunteers are covered by insurance; in what instances volunteers are responsible for their own insurance; and what is required of external agencies deploying volunteers.

The YOT or secure establishment should ensure that there is the best possible insurance cover for volunteers. In certain circumstances, volunteers may have special insurance needs (for instance, if they are required to drive their own vehicles; this can affect their car insurance).

Confidentiality and Data Protection

The volunteer policy should outline the Youth Justice Service's procedures about data protection and confidentiality, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. These should be shared with volunteers as part of the induction process; and volunteers should agree to adhere to them as part of the volunteering agreement.

It is important that volunteers are very clear about how to identify circumstances where they may not be able to maintain confidentiality and will need to report information back to the Youth Justice Service. It is equally important that volunteers know the procedures to apply in those circumstances, and in particular when and to whom they should report this information.

Resolving Problems

An effective relationship between our volunteers and their designated staff member/manager/coordinator is essential. This is built by holding regular one to one performance reviews, supervision and meetings, and de-briefs following every Referral Order Panel. These opportunities encourage open communication in a supportive environment to raise any concerns and for resolutions to be sought. [Click here](#) to see referral order guidance.

However, there may be times when things go wrong, and these situations require more detailed consideration. Having a problem-solving procedure in place allows for a clear focus on constructive resolution and learning. At the heart of this procedure must be a focus on dealing with such matters in a respectful, sensitive, confidential and swift manner.

Stage 1

If a volunteer wishes to raise an issue, in the first instance this should be directed at their staff member/manager/coordinator. If this issue requires a discussion, a private meeting is to take place. If the issue includes their staff member/manager/coordinator, the volunteer is to be directed to seek support from a more senior YOS manager. Resolutions could include an RJC or a different form of mediation that is agreed by both parties. It's important to note that restorative justice should be embedded in all teams, this form of resolution fitting to most if not all scenarios.

Stage 2

If the matter cannot be resolved through Stage 1, then the volunteer may seek to progress to Stage 2. The volunteer should contact the Head of Service/Service Director and request an appointment to discuss their issue and experience of Stage 1. This meeting will have minutes taken to document their concerns. The Head of Service/Service Director will then meet with all involved parties and make recommendations around a resolution. The relevant senior manager will seek to implement the recommendations. If the volunteer is still not satisfied, then they may wish to leave the service.

Complaints against Volunteers

If concerns are raised or a formal complaint is made against a volunteer, the designated staff member/manager/coordinator to discuss this with the volunteer. This is to be done in a private meeting, giving the volunteer the opportunity to consider and respond to the concerns identified. Further enquiries may be necessary to determine facts and identify possible solutions.

Solutions could include:

- Training - Issues with volunteers can often be resolved with training. This allows the volunteer to expand their knowledge, confidence and skill. It also enables the volunteer to make the most of the opportunity they are taking part in be it panel meetings or appropriate adult for example.
- Supervision - An increase in supervision will allow extra support in areas that have caused concern. It also allows both volunteer and supervisor to discuss thoughts and feelings around the complaint in a safe/confidential environment.
- Exit. In some cases, the volunteer may not be willing to take part in either training or extra supervision. This leaves no other resolution, the volunteer will either choose to leave or will be told they can no longer assist the service.

[Click here](#) to view an example of a complaints process/ procedure is available on the Youth Justice Resource Hub

Monitoring and Evaluating the Volunteer Programme

Monitoring and evaluating the volunteer programme will help the YJS or secure establishment to:

- Measure the quality of the volunteers' experience
- Identify their social and economic impact
- Analyse the strengths and weaknesses.

Practitioners responsible for volunteers should decide which information is to be collected, with what frequency, and for what analysis and reporting purposes, and establish the systems needed to implement this.

Identifying outputs and outcomes

The programme itself should have identified outputs and outcomes. For example:

Outputs

- How diverse the volunteers are
- The number of volunteers retained

Outcomes

- How happy the volunteers are (this may be reflected by turnover)
- Whether volunteers are gaining employment or training in a related field
- When volunteers are providing services that contribute to the outputs and outcomes of, for example, a preventive programme or a mentoring project, some measures may be set to monitor their activity. This may include the following.
- The benefit of their involvement to the young people
- Change in the young person's behaviour as a result of their activity

Outputs

- The number of young people the volunteers have supported
- The number of sessions the volunteer have undertaken

It is important that volunteers and staff are aware of any monitoring and evaluation, what it will achieve, and how they contribute to the process.

Monitoring Volunteer Satisfaction

Once volunteers have started their activities, their progress should be reviewed regularly to check whether:

- Their experience of volunteering is positive
- They are still motivated
- They want to learn new skills
- They feel involved
- They feel they are contributing to the YOT or secure establishment.

Endings

When a volunteer leaves, the volunteer coordinator or lead should meet with them to personally thank them for their contribution and to obtain any feedback they may have on their volunteering experience and if they have any suggestions on improvements which can be considered for future volunteers. It would also be good practice to follow up with a letter or card thanking them for their time and help.