**1. Introduction:**

Volunteer organisations often have Equality and Diversity Policies or an Equal Opportunities Policy, and often this might include Inclusivity as the two are very closely linked.

Inclusive volunteering is opening the option of volunteering to people from diverse backgrounds regardless of age, culture, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, social status or disability.

In this guidance we talk about inclusivity and accessibility in terms of practises that provide equal access to volunteer opportunities for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those having physical or intellectual disabilities or belonging to minority groups.

**2. Useful links:**

[Community Works - Inclusion](https://bhcommunityworks.org.uk/voluntary-sector/volunteering/good-practice-guide/inclusion/)

[NCVO - Equity, diversity and inclusion in volunteering](https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/involving-volunteers/understanding-volunteering/equity-diversity-and-inclusion-in-volunteering/#/)

[NCVO - Time Well Spent: Diversity and volunteering](https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/time-well-spent-diversity-and-volunteering/6-what-are-key-issues-and-learnings/#/64-capacity-and-resources)

[NCVO - Harnessing disabled people’s ability to volunteer](https://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2015/01/26/harnessing-disabled-peoples-ability-to-volunteer/#:~:text=The%20benefits%20of%20engaging%20disabled%20volunteers%20By%20properly,down%20false%20perceptions%20or%20stereotypes%20held%20in%20society.)

[NCVO - Volunteering and state benefits](https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/involving-volunteers/volunteers-and-the-law/volunteering-and-benefits/#/)

Further information can be found within [Beecan.org](https://app.beecan.org/) library of resources.

**3. Actions:**

 Consider how open your volunteering opportunities currently are to excluded or marginalized people as listed above

 Review the above links

 Review Appendix 1 for further guidance on how to be inclusive and make your volunteering more accessible

**4. Additional notes:**

For additional support, please contact:
Hull CVS at enquiries@hull-cvs.co.uk for Hull based organisations

HEY Smile at volunteering@heysmilefoundation.org.uk for East Riding based organisations

**5. Disclaimer:**

Whilst we have done our best to source appropriate links and best practice templates to support your organisation, please be aware that due to regulatory changes, these templates may not always be the best example.

We therefore strongly suggest thoroughly reading and amending templates as necessary and conducting periodic reviews of all policies within your organisation to ensure they still meet national guidelines and regulations.

**6. Appendix 1:**

**Making volunteering more inclusive and accessible**

This guidance lists practical things that you can do in an organisation to make volunteering more inclusive and accessible. This is not an exhaustive list, but points to consider and prioritise within an organisation.

Embed inclusion within the organisation

* Review current practices
* Encourage staff and volunteers to challenge discriminatory behaviours, see: [How to challenge discrimination at work | Equality and Human Rights Commission (equalityhumanrights.com)](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/multipage-guide/how-challenge-discrimination-work#:~:text=England-,There%20are%20three%20things%20you%20can%20do%3A,claim%20to%20the%20Employment%20Tribunal.)
* Provide regular training for all staff and volunteers, see: [Free diversity and inclusion virtual courses | Indeed.com UK](https://uk.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/diversity-inclusion-virtual-courses) and [Free Online Equality & diversity Courses & Training | reed.co.uk](https://www.reed.co.uk/courses/free/equality-diversity/online)
* Request strategic direction and buy in from senior staff
* Consider if, how and why your organisation collects demographic data
* Have a dedicated or lead inclusion champion or role
* Ask for feedback from existing staff and volunteers
* Celebrate cultural events that might otherwise be ignored
* Create a cultural calendar to ensure training or events are not planned over religious holidays
* Collaborate with external partners and experts
* Be flexible and create adaptable volunteer opportunities
* Give volunteers opportunities to give feedback on your services and its accessibility
* Actively engage with communities you want to involve in volunteering
* Build relationships with key contacts who have links into different communities

Your organisation’s image

* Aim to recruit staff, volunteers and trustees from diverse backgrounds
* Add pronouns to email signatures
* Include authentic diverse images of volunteers on websites and promotional material
* Share diverse case studies
* Use inclusive language, see: [Inclusive Language Guidance - Equality and Inclusion Unit (leeds.ac.uk)](https://equality.leeds.ac.uk/support-and-resources/inclusive-language-guidance/)

Language / Written Accessibility

* Ask each volunteer what works for them
* Have knowledge of local translation, deaf and sight services
* Have knowledge of local BAME, refugee, asylum seekers and migrant groups for support and signposting
* Have knowledge of local digital services or courses
* Have a picture dictionary available for use
* Offer a ‘chat’ rather than immediate completion of an application form/interview
* Create application forms etc in another language, easy-read format, braille or large print
* Create forms both online and as a paper version
* Allow a form to be completed with them on their behalf where needed
* Build websites with the ability to run text to speech programmes, and include accessible alt text for images, see: [How to write alt-text for image accessibility - Scope for business](https://business.scope.org.uk/article/how-to-write-better-alt-text-descriptions-for-accessibility)

Other Things to Consider

* Openly state if out-of-pocket expenses are provided and consider offering these expenses in advance where needed
* Offer expenses to all, so that it does not marginalise people who can’t afford to travel to and from the place of volunteering or limit them to at-home volunteering
* Put in place a childcare offer or partnership so that parent or guardians can volunteer, or create family volunteering opportunities
* Be flexible with volunteers, especially if they have work or caring commitments
* Create space at the place of volunteering for a wheelchair user to move around and ensure a lift or ramp is available
* Create gender-neutral bathrooms, prayer spaces, quiet rooms etc at the place of volunteering
* Consider if there are parking facilities at the place of volunteering, and if it is free
* Be open to accepting references from people other than past employers, such as faith leaders, support workers, friends or family
* Allow your recruitment process to be as brief and simple as possible, whilst ensuring sufficient levels of checks are carried out
* Understand that some people may not understand to ‘volunteer’, but do understand to ‘help’, ‘give’, ‘support’, or be an ‘active citizen’