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GIRL  
CAN

# VOLUNTEER GUIDE.

## INTRODUCTION

Research shows that significantly more men (63%) volunteer in sport than women (36%). It's time we addressed this and let women across the country know that volunteering offers a great way to support to their community.

Becoming a volunteer can offer some excellent benefits too, such as training, skills development, making new connections, and providing a sense of wellbeing, with volunteers hugely valued at any club or leisure facility.

Increasing the number of female volunteers helps to bring new perspectives to sport and physical activity and encourages more women to participate and even volunteer themselves.

We hope you will be able to apply some of the recommendations to your own area of work.

### 1. RECRUITMENT

Make sure the benefits women gain from volunteering are clearly promoted. Find out what the real barriers and motivators to volunteering are and use these to make what you're offering appeal to women.

- Consider a "member get member" style incentivisation to recruit more volunteers.
- Ensure any messaging or visuals used in the recruitment reflect the demographic of women you're trying to recruit.

### 2. CONVENIENCE

Excessive and confusing form filling is hugely off-putting for those that may be feeling nervous about volunteering. Successful volunteer programmes, clubs and organisations do everything possible to make the paperwork as pain-free as they can. A few suggestions to help make registering to volunteer a simpler process, include:

- Reduce the number of fields that must be filled in
- Provide in-person support at or before training
- Avoid the need to print or scan anything
- If there are online requirements, provide swift and personal technical support – or even do this on their behalf.

### 3. ONGOING SUPPORT

The transition from training to active volunteering is a key area of drop off for female volunteers. It's important to intervene at this time with some strategies to encourage women to stick with it. Here are some of our suggestions:

- Focus on building a community of volunteers - this could be via a Facebook group, WhatsApp group or through social options such as long lunches or tea breaks.
- Offer repeat training - if possible, which will allow women the freedom to build confidence.
- Provide some transitional support – build responsibility slowly by offering opportunities for women to assist more experienced volunteers and practice their skills.
- Establish mentor schemes – offer more experienced women 'lead volunteer' status, with the responsibility of answering queries from newly trained volunteers. This not only benefits new volunteers, but also frees up any paid project managers to focus on expansion and growth plans.

### 4. REWARD

Ensure you recognise and reward the work and time women are putting in; appreciation was the most highly rated reward identified by female volunteers in British Cycling's Breeze programme. Some examples include:

- Personal thank you messages
- Providing club-branded or personalised merchandise (environmentally sustainable is encouraged) to help women feel part of a team.

### 5. FLEXIBILITY

Understanding what your audience needs and responding to this is important when attracting female volunteers. Some examples include:

- Offering a choice of training days and times to help women work around other commitments, such as school holidays and religious festivals.
- Providing childcare or allowing partners and kids to join the training as well.
- Consider a 'role share' arrangement or setting up a WhatsApp group so volunteers can swap shifts amongst themselves.
- Always ask for feedback and ensure the programme is not too rigid so you can react accordingly.



**Click here for further information on these recommendations and the case studies they're based on.**

