



Lowestoft Town Hall Project

Interview Checklist

The following check-list will help guide you through the interview. You should decide in advance which aspects you wish to cover as appropriate to the volunteer and the role. Following this recommended format, you should be able to conduct the interview in under 30 minutes. The timings assume that you will be re-capping on information the volunteer will already have received or offered. You should try and let the volunteer do most of the talking. Take detailed notes on what the volunteer says using the Volunteer Interview Evaluation Form.

| Interview check list | Check |
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| Stage One | |
| ○ Meet at reception – explain fire drill, point out emergency exits and toilets on the way if possible | |
| ○ Guided tour (optional) | |
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| Stage Two (three minutes) | |
| ○ Welcome and introductions | |
| ○ Setting the scene (informal, two-way exchange, format, duration) | |
| ○ Check what information the volunteer has already received | |
| ○ Confirm the volunteer's interests / specific needs (refer to Application Form) | |
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| Stage Three (five minutes) | |
| ○ Confirm the volunteering relationship (the importance of volunteers, and outline the volunteering offer / benefits) | |
| ○ Explain the nature of the volunteering relationship – mutually beneficial, volunteer's gift of time, not a legal employment relationship | |
| ○ Explain the property needs in relation to the Role Profile: set the direction, the volunteer role within this, and the required skills and behaviours to help deliver it | |
| ○ <i>Volunteer's questions so far?</i> | |
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| Stage Four (10 minutes) | |
| ○ Ask Interview Questions – generic and role specific | |
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| Stage Five (5 minutes) | |
| ○ Explain the need to have the right people in the right roles – the 'selection' process and rationale. Explain that volunteers have a settling-in period and review to establish that the project and the volunteer are well-suited | |
| ○ Explain the number of places and number of applicants (if appropriate) | |
| ○ Explain how and by whom the volunteer would be managed | |
| ○ Outline briefly the key policies to set volunteer expectations (e.g. Health and Safety) | |
| ○ Discuss the need for a CRB check if appropriate | |
| ○ Discuss the need for references | |

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| Stage Six (5 minutes) | |
| ○ Discuss whether there is a 'fit' between the volunteer's needs, ability and potential and the requirements of the role, any reservations you and / or the volunteer may have, and decide whether or not the volunteer is appropriate, or , outline the process for appointment / rejection post-interview | |
| ○ Ask how much time the volunteer can give and when they can start | |
| ○ Encourage the completion of the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form (if not completed; explain that this does not influence the decision to appoint) | |
| ○ Discuss any special requirements and review any information declared on the Application Form (explain that this does not influence the decision to appoint) | |
| ○ Take referee and emergency contact details | |
| ○ Complete CRB form if appropriate | |
| ○ Ask to see confirmation of the volunteer's ID | |
| ○ Deal with travel expenses | |
| ○ Ask how the volunteer heard about the opportunity (if not already noted) | |
| ○ Thank the volunteer and re-cap on next steps | |
| ○ Guided tour (optional) | |

Interview Questions

Generic Interview Questions

Some of the questions you will want to ask the potential volunteer will relate to the role they are applying for. However, there are some generic questions that you might find useful. The questions are not too specific, but are prompts for more detailed discussion.

Always ask 'open' questions which require a detailed answer, not 'closed' questions which only require a 'yes' or a 'no' answer. Always read the potential volunteer's application in advance so you can use the information when asking the questions to demonstrate you understand why they have applied.

- Can you tell me briefly what you know about the Town Hall Project generally, and what we do?
- What is it about us and what we do that attracts you?
- What would you like to achieve by volunteering with us?
- What do you think you could bring to the role (e.g. skills, work / volunteering experience, enthusiasm, willingness to learn, etc)?
- Are you comfortable taking direction from others?

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What role-specific questions would you add to these questions?

What additional questions would you include if the potential volunteer:

- disclosed a criminal conviction?
- had a disability?
- had recently had a serious illness / operation?
- was under 18 years old?

Interviewing disabled applicants

When interviewing and assessing the potential of disabled applicants there are a number of specific points to bear in mind:

- Many disabled people may have had negative experiences of volunteering. The approach used needs to take this into account. For example, reassuring applicants and ensuring that you demonstrate a positive and understanding approach. This can be enhanced by asking if there are any requirements before the interview and subsequently providing them, during the discussions ask for the disabled person's view on the potential barriers and likely adjustments which may overcome them, eg transport arrangements or specialist equipment, and flexible working arrangements. Approach the selection in a positive way and help the individual identify positive things they can bring to the role and provide neutral feedback if they are unsuccessful which will help them develop.
- Some young disabled people may have experienced relatively sheltered lives and consequently may have less developed social skills than for non-disabled people of the same age. Take this into account when interviewing and assessing suitability as it may mask the full potential of that individual. It may be appropriate to help develop their social skills as part of the placement and this might be done by using a mentor and ensuring effective feedback on performance as well as support encouragement to take part in any social activities with other volunteers.
- It is inappropriate to ask generalised personal questions about an individual's disability or health condition, however, it is good practice to determine the effect of any impairment or health condition on the person's ability to undertake the tasks involved eg would you need any adjustments to enable you to attend our regular board meetings?
- Appearance or behaviour may be misleading about the candidate's actual potential and ability to fulfil the volunteering role effectively. For example, some impairments may affect a person's body language, e.g. a partially sighted person not making eye contact or a person with a mental health problem appearing apprehensive. Those who are involved in the selection process should be aware that such issues can unconsciously adversely affect their assessments of people. These issues should be addressed in the training people are given in relation to the selection of volunteers and care taken that such issues do not affect assessments; the criteria should be about the person's ability to carry out the role.