

The Good Club Guide for Engaging Young Volunteers

Welcome

The Good Club Guide for Engaging Young Volunteers will assist you in developing a competent and confident workforce through the inclusion of young people. By developing younger members you will ensure the sustainability and success of your club for years to come.

How this resource will help you

This resource will provide you with:

- Top tips on how to target, recruit and retain young volunteers within your club.
- Information on the positive effects of a volunteer mentor.
- Information on creating a Youth Forum.
- Guidance on where to find further information and learning opportunities.

Why strive to include more young volunteers?

Volunteers are essential for the sustainability of an aquatics club. It is important to develop the club workforce and ensure that young people are engaged behind the scenes and not just in the pool. To guarantee the survival of any club it is important to consider what lies ahead. Ask yourself the question – where will our club be in 10 years' time?

Young volunteers can bring fresh new perspectives, energy and enthusiasm and have a positive influence on a club's dynamics. It is healthy for a club to bring in new volunteers and it is important to consider who will be keeping the club running in the future. Combining volunteers of different ages and experience ensures that an effective club workforce is created. This also helps to bridge the gap between the younger swimmers and the older volunteers; a gap often perceived to be the cause of communication barriers between club members. Young swimmers will have someone to relate to, as well as someone to look up to. Young people want to learn from those more knowledgeable and share their experiences, enabling them to have the opportunity to flourish under close guidance and support.

Case study

Name: Lucy Palfreyman

Age: 18

Your main volunteering role

My main role as a volunteer is coaching swimmers and sitting on the Executive Committee at Retford Swimming Club.

How did you first get involved in volunteering?

I first got involved as a volunteer at my local swimming club, Retford Swimming Club. It began when our new head coach, Simon, was appointed. At the time I was going through a difficult period where I

was beginning to miss important qualifying times. I decided that it would be best to leave the performance squad I was currently in, and to continue to swim recreationally.

Simon then encouraged me to take an active role on poolside through coaching as he noticed that I was able to engage well with the younger children. I began shadowing Simon and soon took on my own groups. I now coach on a regular basis, and have recently started teaching on the Learn to Swim programme at my local leisure centre.

What roles have you taken on?

Since first stepping on to poolside as a volunteer, I have engaged in many roles, which have helped me develop the skills I use to coach today. I held the position of Girls' Club Captain for four years, which meant I was able to attend galas and act as a role model for younger children. I have also helped out with the general running of galas and club events, by helping to team manage, and distribute water and snacks. Through sitting on the club's Executive Committee for five years, it has enabled me to have an active say in the decisions made which may affect the swimmers. Separate roles I have taken on include heat managing at the British Gas ASA National (Youth) Championships and being part of the media team at the event, as well as sitting on the ASA National Youth Forum for nearly two years.

What advice would you give to others who are considering volunteering?

My advice would be to embrace every opportunity you are presented with as you never know what it may lead to. Don't be scared when trying out new things.

Young volunteer recruitment

Understanding the motivations for why young people want to volunteer is an important step in helping your club to recruit more young people. Greater knowledge of these motivations will allow you to tailor your offer to appeal to the target audience.

Volunteering provides young people with:

- The opportunity to meet new people.
- The opportunity to have fun.
- Both personal and social development – improving confidence, the ability to work as a team and develop social skills.
- Educational opportunities – Duke of Edinburgh, Sport Leaders UK and similar awards.
- Extracurricular activities – enhancing their CV.
- A sense of responsibility and satisfaction knowing they are helping to make a difference.

When recruiting young volunteers, you must ensure that you outline the volunteering roles which need to be filled, along with the details of what the role will include. The young volunteer will want to know that they will be able to put their skills to good use and understand the impact they can have through being a part of the club.

How the volunteering role is promoted is an important deciding factor in determining a young person's involvement. Any promotional material should be directed to the audience that you want to attract, and be produced in a manner that will relate to young people on a personal level, e.g. the type of language that is used. Think about getting the younger club members to help with the marketing and social media; who knows better than a young person on how to send the right message to reach their peers?

How do I find young people?

- Advertise through your local newspaper and approach schools, colleges and universities.
- Put up a poster in local sports and leisure centres.
- Existing volunteers and club members can promote through word of mouth.
- Social media is a great way to spread the message to young people. Promote your opportunities through a club Facebook or Twitter account. The ASA social media guidance contained in Wavepower (ASA Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures) should be adhered to at all times. Wavepower and further guidance on using Twitter and Facebook is available on the ASA website.
- Hold an open day and offer taster volunteer sessions.
- Contact your local County Sport Partnerships (CSP).
- Visit the local volunteer centre so that they can promote your opportunities.
- Get help from your ASA Club Development Officer.
- Contact your ASA Region who can promote your opportunities – contacts can be found at www.swimming.org/asa/regions.

Inducting young volunteers in your club

Once you have recruited young people, it is important that from the offset they have a fulfilling and enjoyable experience. Volunteers should have an informative induction so that they feel welcomed and part of the team from the word GO!

Mentoring

At the induction stage, it is useful to assign the volunteer to a mentor and make that introduction. It is important that young people know where to find support, should they need it.

Having a mentor provides the volunteer with a sense of continuity. With effective mentoring you can develop a volunteer's strengths and ensure that they grow in confidence. It is important that good practice is shared and volunteers learn from one another. By sharing knowledge and experience they become the volunteer's point of contact and a friendly face. This can help reduce the concerns of young people when becoming a part of something new. Offering a volunteer mentor is a great way of attracting new members to the club.

When appointing volunteer mentors, you should ensure that they show some, if not all, of the following qualities:

- Able to be a positive role model.
- Supportive.

- Friendly.
- Approachable.
- Enthusiastic.
- Patient.
- Able to motivate others.

Becoming a volunteer mentor or allowing young volunteers to shadow you in action is a great way to encourage learning. It allows young volunteers to share and learn from the experiences of others who may be more knowledgeable than themselves. Offering sufficient guidance is the key to creating confident and competent young people that will have the ability to benefit your club. Asking club members to become mentors is a great way to bring all members of the workforce closer together, creating unity as both older and younger volunteers feel valued as a result. Like all volunteers, young people want to know that they are respected and appreciated, while existing volunteers want to ensure their years of experience and their hard work is still valued, so make sure your workforce understand each other and work together.

Communicating with your young volunteers

Good communication with your volunteers is essential, as without clear communication, mistakes can be made. You should ensure that you:

- Regularly communicate with your volunteers and send them updates via the following methods of communication:
 - » Face-to-face.
 - » Phone call.
 - » Email.
- Hold regular meetings to update your volunteers.
- Have a volunteering page on your club website and update it regularly with volunteering news.
- Upload case studies of volunteer achievements to acknowledge their dedication and commitment.
- Identify skills and training that will benefit the individual as well as the club.
- Have consent from a parent(s) or guardian(s) before contacting the volunteer directly if they are under 18.

Retaining young volunteers

An important part of retaining volunteers is by making them feel valued and respected by the club. There are many different ways in which a club can show appreciation to its volunteers. In order to create a happy workforce, appreciation for the time and commitment of these individuals is vital.

Thank them in an appropriate manner; a happy workforce is a productive one! Below you will find a few examples of how you could thank volunteers, but remember this list is not by any means exhaustive.

- A face-to-face thank you.
- Give them a phone call to thank them.
- Send a thank you card.

- Provide volunteers with positive feedback; ask experienced volunteers to share their knowledge with younger club members.
- Recognise volunteer achievements on the club website to highlight hard work.
- Support volunteers in their personal development by providing training opportunities for them.
- Nominating exceptional volunteers for ASA Awards.
- Recognising volunteers during National Volunteers' Week.

Top tip – first impressions count, a warm welcome will bring volunteers back!

Create your own Youth Forum

The drop-out of young people from organised sport, either as participants or volunteers, is a long-standing challenge. One reason for this decline is that young people are not sufficiently engaged in their activities and clubs. Giving young people positions of responsibility and encouraging them to develop their own ideas ensures club sustainability through the ongoing recruitment and training of young leaders. Establishing a club Youth Forum gives young people the chance to participate in the decision-making process of the sport. As a result this encourages more young participants, volunteers and leaders to stay involved with aquatics as the decisions that they make will ultimately impact upon their enjoyment, achievements and commitment to the sport.

The purpose of creating a Youth Forum is for the group to represent the interests of young people participating or volunteering within aquatics. Youth Forum members become a voice for all young athletes, officials and volunteers. The group would be able to assist on club projects and ASA programmes, become ambassadors for the sport at a local level and get the opportunity to link with the National ASA Youth Forum, building a network of proactive young people within the sport.

Ian Mackenzie Management Board Member of ASA Hertfordshire has developed and engaged young people within his region in a Youth Forum.

“The young athletes in our clubs are the ones who inspire the adults to ensure that a swimming club works. There is an abundance of talent within our athletes and it is important to listen to what they have to say – running volunteer courses and getting young people more involved in the administration and organisational side of the club is one way to make use of that talent. Young people can help their peers and relate better to young swimmers when supporting on poolside. Using their skills on computers, as marshals, officials, or as helpers at the end of the lane cannot be over-emphasised as an asset to the club. It is easy for us to say what young people should be doing, but it is even better to give 14-25-year-olds the chance to have a voice. Now is the time to let the young people and athletes have this opportunity to drive the next generation of volunteers forward, and the best way for that to happen is via a Youth Forum. They simply need the support, encouragement and blessing of the County and Region. Young people need to feel valued and have this voice to be able to inspire us all to achieve better things. The Youth Forum is the way forward.”

For more information on how to set up a Youth Forum, please see the ASA Youth Forum Development Toolkit which is available on the ASA Volunteering Hub.

Summary

We hope you have found this guide informative. Thank you for taking the time to learn more about how you can engage young volunteers. Club support ensures that the ASA can continue to provide a sport for all.

swim21

swim21 is the ASA's quality mark for the development of effective, ethical and sustainable clubs. The opportunity to gain swim21 accreditation is available to all ASA affiliated clubs, across any of the aquatic disciplines, regardless of size or activity delivered. swim21 is about creating the best possible aquatic experience for all and raising the quality of aquatic provision across all areas. The swim21 programme enhances club management, strengthens the structures and unites the club with shared goals to ensure the best environment is available for all swimmers.

To find out more about swim21 and the associated benefits, please visit www.swimming.org/asa/clubs-and-members/swim21-accreditation/.

Equality and diversity

Is your club as inclusive as it could be? Does your club truly reflect the local demographics? Aquatic sports can and should be made accessible to everyone, to the greatest extent possible. Opening your club to everyone will aid with sustainability, add new dimensions to the club's social element, and you may even find talent, in many different forms, where you least expect it. Read more about the ASA's commitment to equality and diversity and find further support for clubs at this link: www.swimming.org/asa/about-us/equality/.

Further information

The ASA accepts no liability for any errors or omissions in this resource. Further, whilst it is hoped that volunteers will find this resource useful, no liability arising out of its use can be accepted by the ASA or the club. This resource is not a contract of employment and the role you undertake as a volunteer will not create an employment relationship between you and the club or the ASA.

ASA Volunteering Hub

Did you know that the ASA has a dedicated hub for volunteers? To access this hub, go to www.swimming.org/volunteering or email us at volunteering@swimming.org.

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Useful links

The ASA

www.swimming.org/asa

Sport England

www.sportengland.org

Child Protection in Sport Unit

www.thecpsu.org.uk

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations

www.ncvo.org.uk

Sport and Recreation Alliance

www.sportandrecreation.org.uk

Volunteering England

www.volunteering.org.uk

Sport England Club Matters

www.sportenglandclubmatters.com

Youth Sport Trust

www.youthsporttrust.org