

CLUB VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT GUIDE

Recruiting volunteers is one of the biggest challenges for community Rugby League clubs. Getting it right can ease the pressure on existing volunteers and strengthen your club.

This guide provides a step-by-step approach to help your club identify the support you need, attract the right people, and create a positive experience that encourages volunteers to stay involved.

STEP 1. ASSESS YOUR NEEDS

The first step is to identify the roles and support your club needs.

Consider:

- What tasks need to be done
- What key roles are currently vacant
- What skills are required to get where we want to be
- How much time is required to fill these gaps

Understanding your needs help to ensure you are targeted with your recruitment and that you are prioritising the roles that will provide the greatest benefit to your club.

Volunteer Recruitment Plan Template

The RFL Club Development Plan document contains a Volunteer Recruitment Plan template that provides an easy-to-use template to help you:

- Assess your current volunteer capacity
- Define the volunteer roles you want to recruit
- Map out where you will find the people you need to recruit and how you will engage them

The RFL Club Development Plan document can be downloaded [here](#).

STEP 2. DEVELOP CLEAR ROLES

Once you have decided on the volunteer roles you want to recruit, the next step is to create volunteer role descriptions. The purpose of a role description is to explain in simple terms what a volunteer role involves and why the role matters.

The Institute for Volunteering Research found that role clarity is the strongest predictor of volunteer satisfaction. Volunteers who clearly understand their role from the beginning are 67% more likely to still be volunteering 12 months later. If a role does not match volunteer expectations, they may be disappointed and stop volunteering.

A good role description should include:

- Key responsibilities listed without using any jargon
- Time commitment
- Skills needed (if any)
- What benefits will some get from volunteering in the role

The less people know about a role, the scarier it will seem. By providing clear role descriptions you help potential volunteers understand what they are signing up for and address potential concerns.

The below role description templates can be downloaded and edited to be used in your club.

Chair	Club Registrar	Club Welfare Officer	Coaching Coordinator
Facilities Manager	First Aider	Funding Officer	GameDay Manager
Physiotherapist	Secretary	Social Media Coordinator	Team Coach
Team Manager	Treasurer	Volunteer Coordinator	Website Manager

STEP 3. ASK AND PROMOTE

After you have defined the volunteer roles you are looking to recruit, the next step is to start recruiting. Using a two-pronged approach of **Direct Asks** and **Wider Promotion** will ensure you reach as many people as possible with your recruitment message. However, most of your results will likely come from personal invitations.

Making Structured Direct Asks

Instead of recruiting through general “Volunteers Needed” messages on social media, try the following:

1. Identify the role you want to recruit
2. Identify a specific person who matches the role requirements
3. Make a direct personal Invitation

What does this shift look like in practice?

Before: Facebook post saying “Volunteers wanted for weekends” ❌

After: Identifying a parent and approaching them after a match to ask, “could you help as the GameDay manager for the U10s team twice a month? We think you’d be great at it and we will support you through training and registration.” ✅

Why does this work?

Because it removes uncertainty and hesitation that can act as barriers to people volunteering.

When people see a general “Volunteers Needed” advert, they might think:

- “They probably don’t mean me”
- “I don’t know what’s involved”
- “I don’t have enough time”
- “Someone else will do it”

A direct personal ask addresses these barriers by:

- Making it clear that the person has been specifically chosen
- Explaining exactly what a role involves
- Defining a clear and manageable time commitment
- Reassuring the person that support will be provided.

A direct ask also creates a sense of social connection and responsibility. People are more likely to say yes to a person than a post.

STEP 3. CONTINUED

Supporting your asks with wider promotion

While personal invitations should be your focus, wider promotion still plays an important role in reaching people and building awareness.

The more channels you use, the more people you reach. Some key channels to use are:

- Club social media pages and website
- Club newsletters and direct emails
- Club notice boards and events
- WhatsApp groups
- Local community network

Practical tips to improve your promotion:

- Promote individual roles rather than general calls for help
- Highlight the benefits of volunteering and what someone will get out of the role
- Clearly list the time commitment required
- Use multiple channels and post repeatedly (potential volunteers sometimes need to see a role 4 or 5 times before they act)
- Make the next step clear (tell people who they can contact to express their interest)

Think of volunteer recruitment as two complimentary approaches

- **Wider promotion** builds awareness and interest
- **Direct Asks** turn that interest into action

STEP 4. RESPOND TO INTEREST QUICKLY AND FIND THE RIGHT FIT

When someone expresses interest in volunteering at your club, respond quickly and have a conversation about the role.

The aim of this initial conversation should be to:

- Answer questions and address potential concerns
- Clearly explain what volunteers can expect from you and what you expect from them
- Ensure the applicant is suitable for the role
- Recruit volunteers in line with safer recruitment best practice

Try to respond to interested volunteers within **48 hours** to ensure applicants feel valued and don't lose interest while waiting to hear back.

STEP 4. CONTINUED

Safer recruitment

It is important to take a safe and consistent approach when recruiting volunteers, especially for roles involving children or vulnerable groups. This helps to protect participants and other volunteers and build trust within the club.

For relevant roles:

- Complete DBS checks
- Follow your club's safeguarding policy
- Clearly explain role responsibilities and boundaries

STEP 5. ONBOARD AND SUPPORT

Onboarding

Once you have recruited a new volunteer, it is important to welcome them properly by providing the support they need to get started with confidence. A positive first experience is crucial in order to keep volunteers engaged and retain them long-term.

Some important onboarding activities include:

- Introducing them to key contacts at the club
- Assigning them a 'Buddy' to provide one-to-one support while they find their feet
- Supporting them with GameDay registration, safeguarding checks, EtrainU access, and any training required for their role
- Giving them a tour of the club and talking through club policies

A supportive onboarding process helps volunteers feel confident and valued from the start. Having one clear process for all volunteers is important to keep your onboarding consistent across all new volunteers.

[Volunteer Induction Checklist](#) - This checklist can be edited to suit your club needs and used to consistently onboard new volunteers.

Continued Support

Once a new volunteer has been onboarded, continue to show them they are supported and valued by the club by:

- Checking in with them weekly for the first month
- Ask them for feedback on the onboarding process
- Provide encouragement and recognition for their contribution
- Invite them to social events or club meetings so they feel part of the club community from the beginning
- Gradually increase responsibilities as their skills and confidence grow

PROCESS RECAP

1. Assess your needs
2. Develop clear volunteer roles
3. Ask and promote
4. Respond to interest quickly and find the right fit
5. Onboard and support

FURTHER SUPPORT

For further support, contact volunteering@rfl.co.uk.