

Onboarding & The First Weeks

A clear, supportive start helps volunteers feel confident, connected and set up for success in their role.

WELCOME TO THE TEAM

A supportive start leads to stronger engagement and lasting impact



Essential Actions

- ☐ Provide a clear onboarding checklist or timeline
- ☐ Break information into manageable stages
- ☐ Avoid giving all information at once
- ☐ Clearly explain:
 - expectations
 - boundaries
 - responsibilities
 - support processes
 - safeguarding / escalation procedures
- ☐ Provide a named point of contact
- ☐ Schedule proactive check-ins during the first few weeks
- ☐ Explain how volunteers can ask for support
- ☐ Clarify communication methods and preferences
- ☐ Make role expectations specific and measurable where possible
- ☐ Explain step-by-step what happens on their first day volunteering
- ☐ Provide information in writing so that volunteers can refer back to it when needed



Good Practice

- ☐ Offer buddy systems or peer support
- ☐ Create "meet the team" guides or photo instructions
- ☐ Use short videos, visuals and subtitles alongside written information
- ☐ Offer flexibility in pacing and learning
- ☐ Recognise volunteer contributions early and consistently
- ☐ Regularly revisit whether the role still feels manageable and meaningful
- ☐ Encourage feedback and adapt where possible



Reflective Questions

- ☐ Would a new volunteer know exactly what to do on day one?
- ☐ Are we supporting confidence-building, not just compliance?
- ☐ Are we assuming volunteers will ask for help if struggling?
- ☐ Does our onboarding create belonging or just transfer information?
- ☐ Are we setting volunteers up to thrive in the long term?



Small changes make a big difference

A supportive start builds confidence, connection and belonging - creating a positive volunteering experience that lasts.



Cup-O-T:
Wellness and Therapy Services.