

MAY 2022

ENGLAND ATHLETICS CLUB GUIDE

SAFE RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS



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Welcome to our safe recruitment guide

England Athletics seeks to provide an environment where all, and specifically those who are vulnerable, are kept safe from harm, abuse, and neglect while they are involved with athletics. This toolkit aims to help clubs recruit volunteers safely.



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SAFE RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

Introduction: England Athletics seeks to provide safe and enjoyable experiences in athletics and running. Sound recruitment procedures are essential, and having a clear process in place to manage the recruitment of club volunteers will help safeguard the club's integrity and its members. It often acts as a deterrent for those that are looking to volunteer for the wrong reasons and can lead to better retention of volunteers.

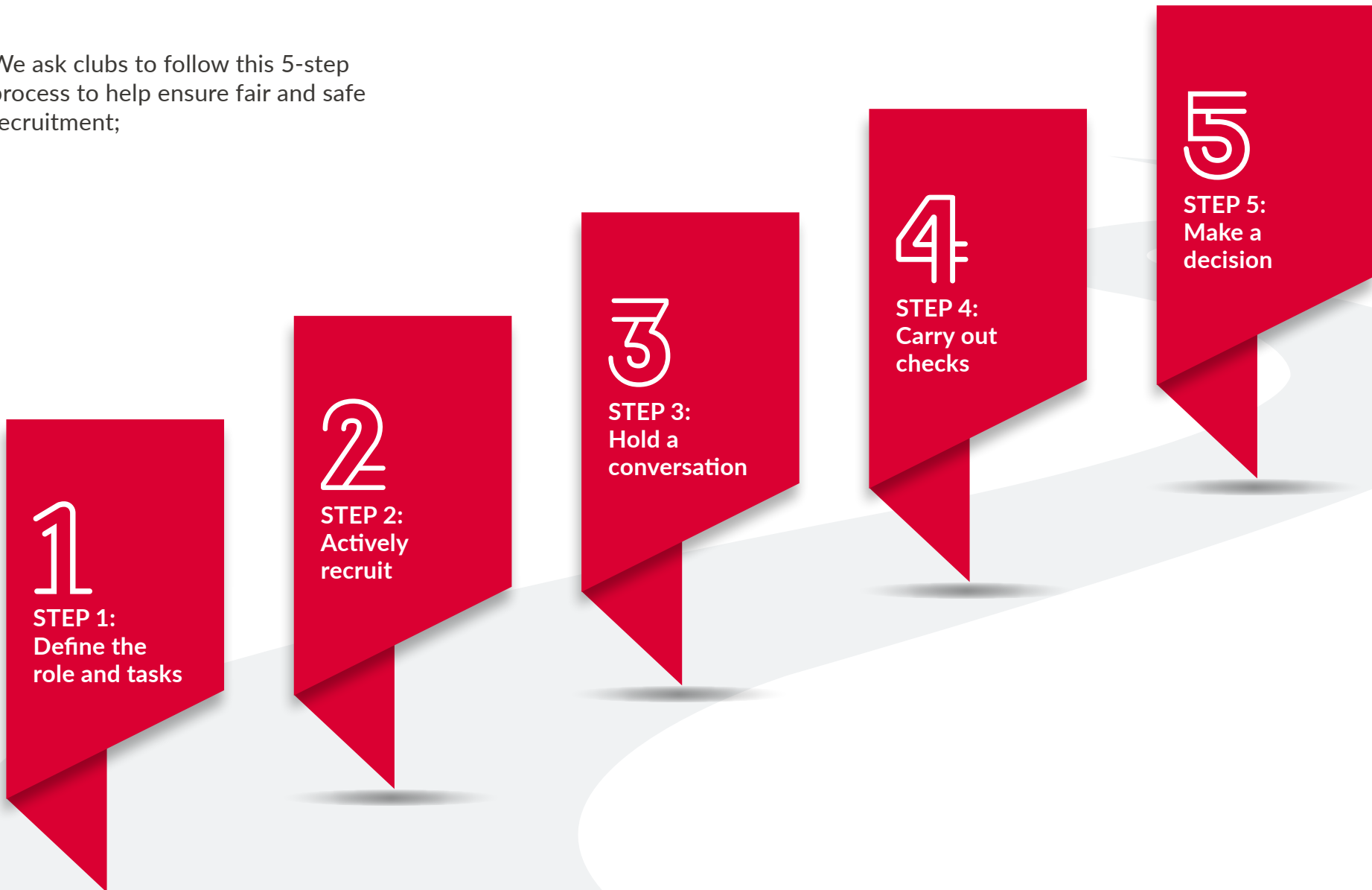
The club committee is responsible for ensuring that all club activity is safe. It therefore needs to ensure the safe recruitment of volunteers. This may be delegated to others in the club such as a volunteer co-ordinator or welfare officer.

Having a designated person to manage the recruitment and retention of volunteers provides a focus to ensure due diligence is taken and encourages a consistent approach. This then helps volunteers feel supported and gives them a point of contact to discuss development needs or raise any issues. It also enables the club to become aware of any concerns about the volunteer and to raise these with them in a supportive way.



5-STEP PROCESS

We ask clubs to follow this 5-step process to help ensure fair and safe recruitment;



STEP 1 – DEFINE THE ROLE(S)

What does this involve?

- ✔ Identify the roles where you require volunteer support.
- ✔ Create a short role description to outline the main tasks and responsibilities.
- ✔ Include information on how the volunteer will be supported and any training available to them.
- ✔ Ensure the final role profile is agreed by the club committee.

The benefits of defining the role:

- ✔ It helps you identify gaps where you need volunteer support.
- ✔ It enables you to attract the right person.
- ✔ It helps potential volunteers understand your expectations and the support available.
- ✔ It enables the club to assess the scope and needs of the role.

Find ways to answer these common volunteer questions:

Is this the right role for me?

How much time will it take?

Will I fit in with other club members?

Do I have the skills they need?

Doing this will ensure volunteers know what is expected of them, feel comfortable, and are a 'good fit' with the club ethos.

Top Tips:

- Adapt and tailor the role descriptions provided by England Athletics in Club Hub.
- Be clear on the time commitment required for the role.
- Define any ad hoc volunteering opportunities i.e., those casual opportunities where volunteers can dip in and out, perhaps working in project teams or working groups.

STEP 2 – ACTIVELY RECRUIT

What does this involve?

- ✔ Promoting volunteering opportunities, highlighting the skills and experience required, the role to be fulfilled and the nature of the recruitment process, including any relevant checks.
- ✔ Providing an application form with a self-declaration and disclosure form so potential volunteers can apply more easily.
- ✔ The application form must include a request for two references. Referees/ references should be unrelated to the volunteer and relevant to the role. For an existing coach or volunteer from another club or different sport, at least one of the references should be from their previous club or sport.
- ✔ The self-declaration and disclosure form should be completed
- ✔ Acknowledging all applications, even if unsuccessful.

The benefits of actively recruiting:

- ✔ Ensures club members are aware of volunteering opportunities within the club and have equal opportunity to apply for them.
- ✔ It can bring new expertise into the club.
- ✔ It provides a clear process which will not only help recruit volunteers, but also gives potential volunteers the information required to apply.
- ✔ Advertising a clear role description and process could deter unsuitable people from volunteering.
- ✔ You will be able to find out more about the volunteer and assess their suitability for the role; it may be that there is another role in the club that would be more suitable.
- ✔ It gives the opportunity for potential volunteers to highlight their skills.

Top Tips:

- Use club websites, newsletters and social media so that existing members can see the opportunities available.
- Promote outside the club i.e., in the local press.
- Ensure language used does not discriminate in terms of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.
- On the club membership form, add a section so potential volunteers can express their interest when they first join.
- Showcase different volunteers and their roles to inspire others to get involved.
- Make the application form digital, enabling you to store personal data safely.

STEP 3 – HOLD A CONVERSATION

What does this involve?

- ✓ Anyone who is being considered for a role within the club should be given the opportunity to have a conversation with a club representative. Ideally this should be with two people from the committee and may include a welfare officer or volunteer coordinator.
- ✓ You could use this opportunity to check identification for the self-declaration and disclosure form and see their license card (if applicable).
- ✓ The conversation should be informal and can take place over the phone, via video call or in person.

The benefits of defining the role:

- ✓ It provides a welcoming first contact with your club.
- ✓ The club has an opportunity to get to know its volunteers beyond their application form.
- ✓ Having a conversation with the volunteer should be a two-way process; it's as much about the volunteer deciding whether they like the club and understand the role, as it is about the club deciding to recruit the volunteer.
- ✓ It gives the volunteer the opportunity to talk about their application and ask any questions.
- ✓ It might lead you to find the volunteer is more suited to a different role within the club.

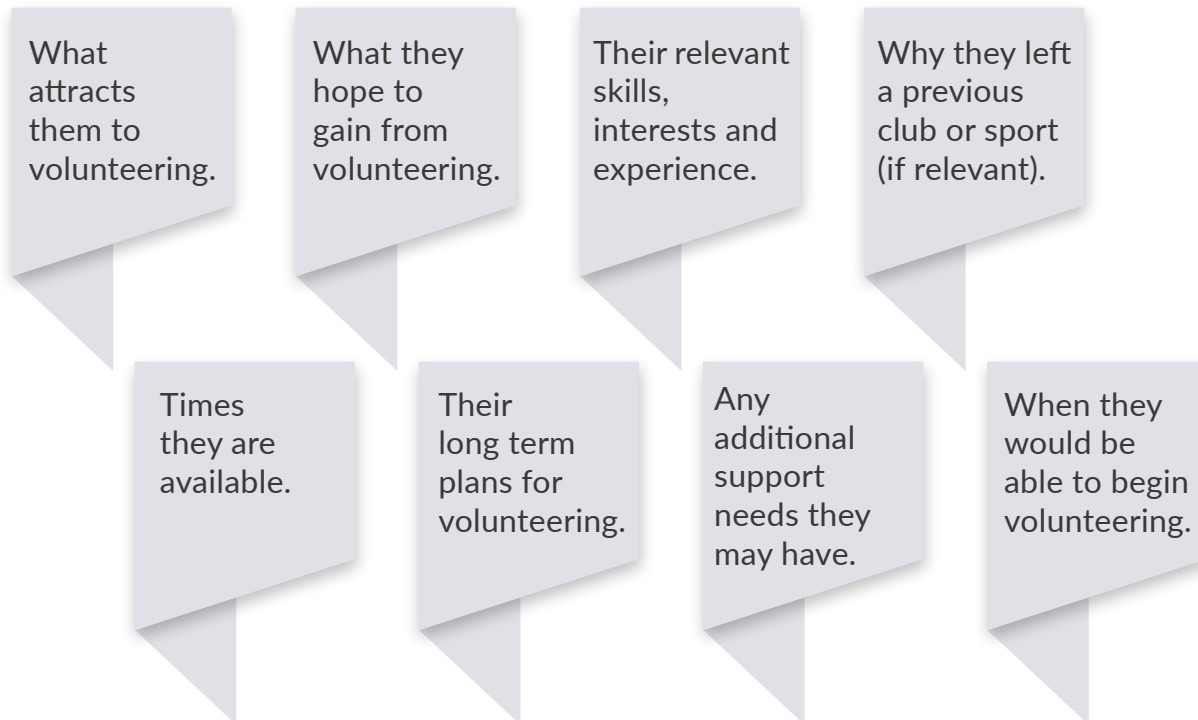
Top Tips:

- Send information in advance to the volunteer such as in a welcome letter with information about the club, the volunteer role(s), practical information about expenses and training, and information from existing volunteers about the benefits of volunteering with the club.
- Ask the volunteer how they would like to have a conversation – in person, over the phone or via video call.

Conversation starters:

- ✓ A brief overview of the club – what the club offers, how you operate and plans for the future.
- ✓ The role description and tasks.
- ✓ Any training and support offered to volunteers, including any compulsory training.
- ✓ How the volunteer will be supported in their role and how they can raise any concerns or problems.
- ✓ Role progression, if applicable.
- ✓ The club's expectations of volunteers.
- ✓ The days and times available.
- ✓ Any resources available to volunteers whilst they are volunteering for you.

You may want the potential volunteer to tell you:



STEP 4 – CARRY OUT CHECKS

What does this involve?

- ✔ For an existing coach or technical official, check their licence by asking to see their card and cross checking it on myAthletics Portal.
- ✔ For coaches who have completed a qualification but aren't licensed, direct them to information on how to gain their license
- ✔ It is recommended that team managers complete a DBS and the online safeguarding course
- ✔ It is recommended that welfare officers complete DBS, online safeguarding, and Time to Listen (welfare officer specific training).
- ✔ Follow up references either verbally or in writing – always make a written record of any verbal references.
- ✔ Ensure that the self-declaration and disclosure form has been completed and reviewed (as stated in step 2) for all volunteers. This provides instant information whilst the DBS check is being processed.
- ✔ Check any qualifications that are applicable for specific roles (e.g. sports therapist, strength and conditioning coach).

The benefits of carrying out checks:

- ✔ It ensures you recruit the right people to volunteer at your club.
- ✔ You can check their character and suitability for your club.
- ✔ It ensures you have checked their suitability to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- ✔ You can verify qualifications and licences.
- ✔ It ensures you are following safe recruitment practices.

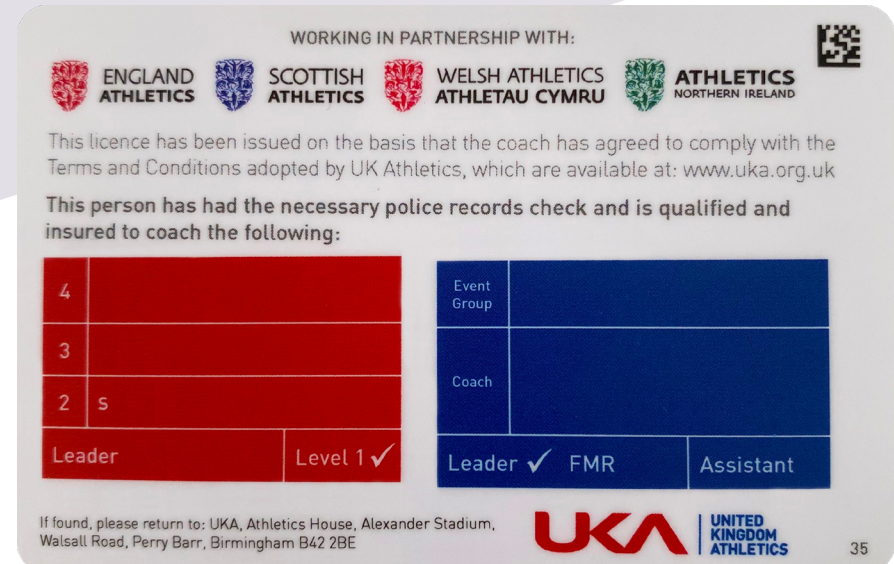
Top Tips:

- Allocate roles to coaches and officials on myAthletics Portal to help you manage and check that they are appropriately qualified and licensed.
- For qualifications outside of England or UK Athletics, check with the relevant association or accreditation body.

Did you know...

Every UKA Licensed Coach and Technical Official is issued with a licence, valid for 3 years, which contains a photograph, an expiry date, and details of the qualifications held by the individual. It will also state whether they are licensed to work with children and/or adults only. If the licence has expired (i.e., is more than 3 years old from date of issue or DBS checks or other mandatory training have not been completed), the individual is not licensed or insured via UKA and must not continue coaching at your club.

- ✔ From 1 April 2022, coaches who complete a coach education course must also complete a first aid course to be licensed.
- ✔ From 1 April 2023, any coaches renewing the licence will need to complete a first aid course alongside safeguarding and DBS.



STEP 5 – MAKE A DECISION

What does this involve?

At least two club committee representatives should consider all the information you receive via:

- ✓ The application form
- ✓ The conversation
- ✓ Outcome of the take-up of references
- ✓ Self-declaration and disclosure form outcome
- ✓ DBS
- ✓ UK Athletics Licence status for leaders, coaches and technical officials.
- ✓ Other applicable qualifications.

The benefits of making a decision:

- ✓ You can now review all information about the volunteers and come to an informed decision on behalf of the club committee.
- ✓ You can confirm with a volunteer the role they would be most suited to.

For poor references, concerns with self-declaration and disclosure forms or any information which you are unsure about or causes you concern, please contact welfare@englandathletics.org or call **07920 532553** for guidance.

Top Tips:

- Involve others in the decision making, such as your volunteer co-ordinator, welfare officer and any volunteer you may be offering support to.
- It is important to recognise that volunteers may have limited relevant experience but can offer transferable skills, enthusiasm, an appetite to learn and an understanding of the ethos at your club. Investing time and energy in supporting committed individuals to gain experience and skills is often the way to find much-needed volunteers.
- Use the information to devise a plan of support for the volunteer.
- Consider an induction and ongoing management for the volunteer to ensure they remain suitable and feel supported.



For more digital
club support, visit the
England Athletics
[Club Hub](#)