



Volunteers assisting ex- offenders in England and Wales.

Andrew Watson.

- ▶ Broad voluntary sector (NGOs) attracts 11.9 million regular volunteers in Britain :A history and culture of volunteering.
- ▶ Estimated 1,750 voluntary organisation for ex offenders - part of a wider network of 4916 organisations with criminal justice is one of areas of work (Source Clinks).
- ▶ Organisations range from volunteer-led groups to large, multi million pound organisations with thousands of staff. Many have both paid staff and teams of volunteers. Some only work in their local community, whilst others serve larger areas, including the UK and beyond. More people work for voluntary organisations than work in the criminal justice system than the prison and probation services combined.
- ▶ Nine members of staff for every twenty volunteers in voluntary organisations working in criminal justice.

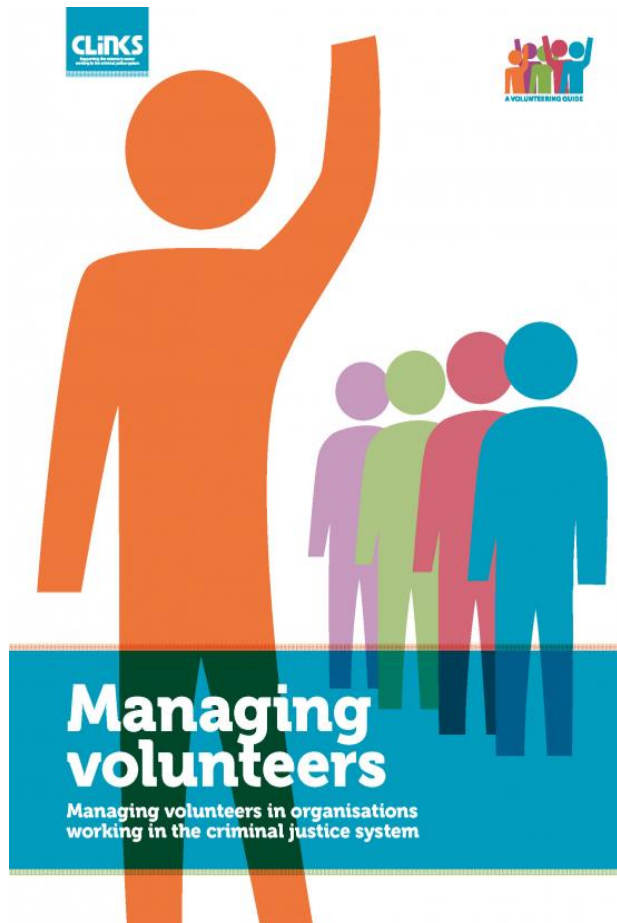
- ▶ Large variety of activity. Some specialise in meeting the needs of a particular group of people, for example women, older people or people from particular ethnic groups, prisoners and their families.
- ▶ Others focus on a particular issue, for example substance misuse, debt advice or housing.
- ▶ Some groups focus on a form of intervention, the arts, restorative justice and so on.
- ▶ Information on hundreds of voluntary and community organisations working in the criminal justice system is provided in the Clinks' [Directory of Services](#) - an online database.



- ▶ Much good practice involving volunteers, **but also inconsistency in the way that volunteers are recruited, managed reimbursed and retained.**
- ▶ Clinks - infrastructure organisation supporting voluntary organisations in the criminal justice system, and National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) , which champions the voluntary sector and volunteering produced "Managing Volunteers".
- ▶ A valuable source of information.
- ▶ Managing volunteers includes guidance on:
- ▶ Developing a volunteer programme
- ▶ Recruiting volunteers
- ▶ Rewarding, recognising and retaining volunteers.

NCVO





Designed as a reference document and each section has links to further information, particularly the NCVO Knowhow website, which is a valuable source of information.

Developing a volunteer programme

Identifying the need for volunteers and creating volunteer roles;

Writing volunteer policies and agreements;

Preparing volunteers for their role;

Training;

Dealing with problems, complaints and disputes;

Monitoring and evaluating a volunteer programme;

The legal position of volunteers;

Health and safety, and insurance;

Data protection and copyright;

Expenses.



Recruiting volunteers.

Understanding safeguarding;

Recruitment methods;

Screening potential volunteers;

Checking a person's criminal record;

Equal opportunities and diversity;

State benefits, refugees, asylum seekers and people from overseas;

People with convictions as volunteers .



Rewarding, recognising and retaining volunteers.

Accreditation of volunteering

The benefits of accreditation

Reward and recognition

Saying thank you

Events

Award schemes

Key importance of support and supervision, relevant training and offering extra responsibility demonstrating the organisation is committed to its volunteers.



CoPPer, European Volunteering in Probation :
"Evidence Review of Volunteering in
Probation". 2024.

Inter alia this document contains
much that is of practical
assistance to organisations using ,
or contemplating using, volunteers
in matters of recruitment, training,
reward and managing risk.



England and Wales.

After decades, especially since the 1960s, of using volunteers directly in considerable numbers the Probation Service ceased to do so at the turn of this century. A lost landscape that was once very full.

Their return is being considered. In the discussion I would be happy talk about the arguments for reintroduction and obstacles that would need to be overcome for it to be a success.

Thank you for your attention.

