



## Steps for Obtaining Feedback from Volunteers

### Step 1 – What do you want feedback on, and from whom?

Take a moment to consider if you want the feedback to answer a specific question, or if you just want general feedback on the volunteer experience at your club/association. Also decide who you want to provide the feedback. It's a good idea to have a look at how both your volunteers and members/service users experience your volunteer program.

Examples of specific questions you might want the answer to:

- Is the orientation procedure effective at getting volunteers started?
- Do our members see the benefit of the work our volunteers do?

### Step 2 – How will you get this information?

Depending on what your answer was in step 1, develop a few questions that you can ask. These questions should give you the information you need to answer your initial question. Try and limit the number of open-ended questions to a maximum of 5.

Examples for the first example question in step 1:

- When you started your role as a volunteer, did the orientation you were provided with make you feel ready for the role? Please provide some detail.
- Looking back, what do you think would have made starting your volunteer role easier?

### Step 3 – How will you get your target demographic to provide feedback?

Now that you have identified your demographic and have developed the questions that will get you the information you need, the next step is to ask those questions. First you need what method you will use to ask your questions.

Example methods for asking your questions:

- Asking directly. If your target demographic is your volunteers, you could ask your questions after they are done for the day, at a volunteer meeting, or sent via email.
- When conducting a performance review or an exit interview you can ask the volunteer for their feedback.
- If you are asking members or service users, you could send them an email, include it in a newsletter, or have a feedback form next to where they register or sign in.
- Online options could include having a poll or survey on your Facebook page, or having a feedback form set up on your website.

Make sure respondents have the option to provide feedback anonymously, for example by leaving the printed questions next to a feedback box, or using an online tool like [SurveyMonkey](#).



#### **Step 4 – Keep track of the feedback**

You need to prepare a way to organise and store the feedback you receive. An easy way to do this is to copy the feedback into the feedback spreadsheet created by Volunteering WA. Organising your feedback in a spreadsheet will make it easier for you to analyse the responses you receive. It makes it easier to send people the results of your survey.

#### **Step 5 – Follow up on the feedback**

If the feedback you receive is not anonymous, then verbally, or via email, thank the people who provide feedback. If their feedback is something you are going to action, let that person know. You could also ask the individual if they are willing to answer a couple more questions in detail (provided they are useful questions). You could email the questions to them, or organise to meet for an informal interview.

#### **Step 6 – Evaluating your feedback**

Firstly you have to expect that some feedback will be negative – this is the feedback that you can use to make positive changes to your volunteer management procedures. If the feedback has an overly negative tone, or is impolite, don't be offended and don't disregard the feedback. Look at the feedback, pick out the points they are trying to make, and turn it into a useful piece of feedback.

When you have received enough responses you can start to have a look for patterns. Are the respondents identifying the same area that needs improvement? This should be the first thing you focus on. Does the feedback not identify anything that could be better? You may need to ask your questions in a different way, or make it anonymous to get honest opinions.

While you are evaluating the feedback, think about how it compares to your perspective, and then think about it from the volunteer's situation. Putting yourself in the volunteer's shoes should give you some perspective on the reasoning behind the feedback.

#### **Step 7 – Make an action plan**

Once you have evaluated the feedback you should have an idea of what areas need to be improved. Create a list of areas or procedures for improvement based on the feedback. On this list, number the areas or procedures based on their importance. This should be your plan of attack, working on the most important things first.

Create a schedule for when you want these changes to happen by, and what needs to be done to make those changes. Be realistic, taking into account what time and resources you have available. If somebody else is in charge of the area which needs changing, get them involved – preferably from the beginning of the feedback process!

It can be tempting to go for the easy fixes first, but if the feedback identifies an important area which will take a bit of work to fix, focus on that area first.