

HOW TO BE AN ACTIVITY BUDDY CO-ORDINATOR

Section 1 - The Activity Buddy Scheme Process

Section 2 - The Activity Buddy Scheme Co-ordinator

What is the role of an Activity buddy coordinator

What is an Activity Buddy?

How many volunteers do I need?

What motivates someone to become an activity buddy?

Section 3 - Where can I find Activity Buddies?

County Sports Partnerships and Community Sports Networks

Local Volunteer Centres

Do-It.org

Colleges and Universities

Corporate Social responsibility

Diversity in Volunteering

Recruiting from within

Section 4 - Activity buddy recruitment policy and practice

Volunteer Policy

CRB checks

Reference Checks

Insurance

Health & Safety and risk assessments

Grievance Procedure

Confidentiality

Expenses incl. expenses and state benefits

Section 5 - Once you have your volunteers.....?

Induction of activity Buddies

Training resources

Health & safety risk assessments

Buddying Up – The matching process

Section 6 – Funding

How much do you need?

How to access funding?

Section 7 - A Successful Activity Buddy Scheme

How to retain activity buddies

Activity Buddy Incentives

Recognition of Activity Buddies

Activity Buddy review

Problems & dealing with conflict

Volunteer rewards

Monitoring Activity buddy leavers

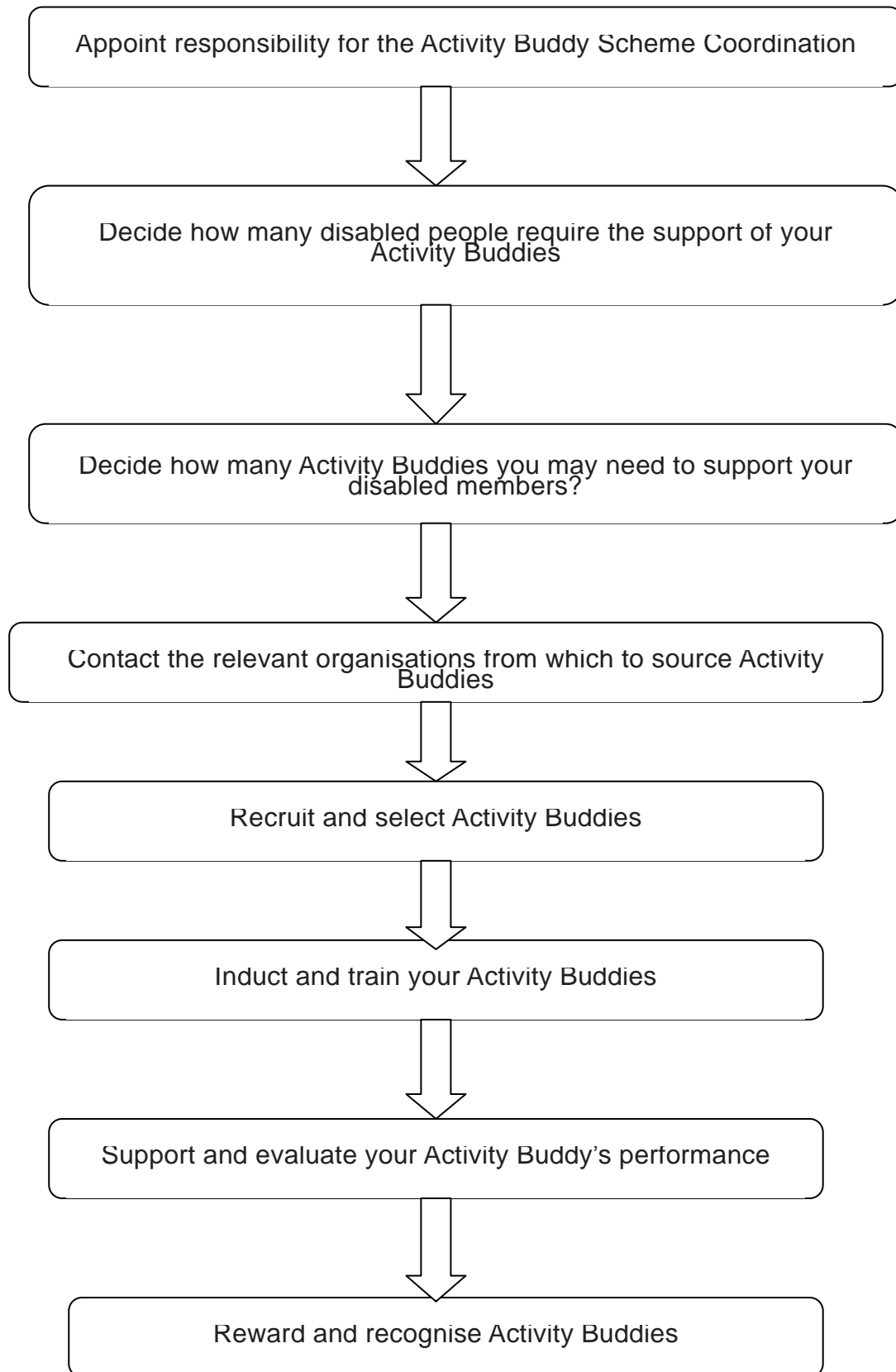
Section 1 - The Activity Buddy Scheme Process

This Activity Buddy Scheme Resource has been developed to provide the information and tools required to achieve the most effective roll out of the Activity Buddy Scheme possible. It will answer the following questions to enable your organisation to deliver a successful volunteer scheme:

- What is an Activity Buddy?
- Why would someone want to become an Activity Buddy?
- From where and how do I recruit Activity Buddies?
- What policies should be in place?
- How do I train Activity Buddies?
- How do I retain and support Activity Buddies?
- How do I reward and recognise Activity Buddies?

The only other requirements in addition to this resource are time and commitment to the Activity Buddy Scheme. There is very little, if any, cost involved in setting up this volunteer scheme, but the organisation, as a whole, needs to be committed to improving the overall provision for disabled users. It is therefore important that all staff members are aware of the scheme and support the Activity Buddy Coordinator and Activity Buddies in their roles. It may help to provide other staff members with information relating to the scheme to prepare them and keep them in the loop.

The process of the Activity Buddy Scheme should take the following path: -



Section 2 - Activity Buddy Scheme Coordination

First thing's first: To ensure that the Activity Buddy Scheme is a success, responsibility and co-ordination for its roll-out needs to be firmly established at the highest level. An 'Activity Buddy Coordinator' as such, will need to be tasked with the responsibility for the scheme's delivery. At first it may be necessary for the club manager or coach to take on this responsibility until there is an established and responsible buddy to take over this role.

We are confident that you will recognise the benefits of the Activity Buddy Scheme and hopefully create the Activity Buddy Coordinator role to train and constantly support your buddies. If this first step is done correctly the scheme will run smoothly, the buddies will feel they are being taken seriously and are appreciated in the organisation and your disabled members will be better supported and will therefore be more likely to have consistent positive experiences and continue with their sport or physical activity.

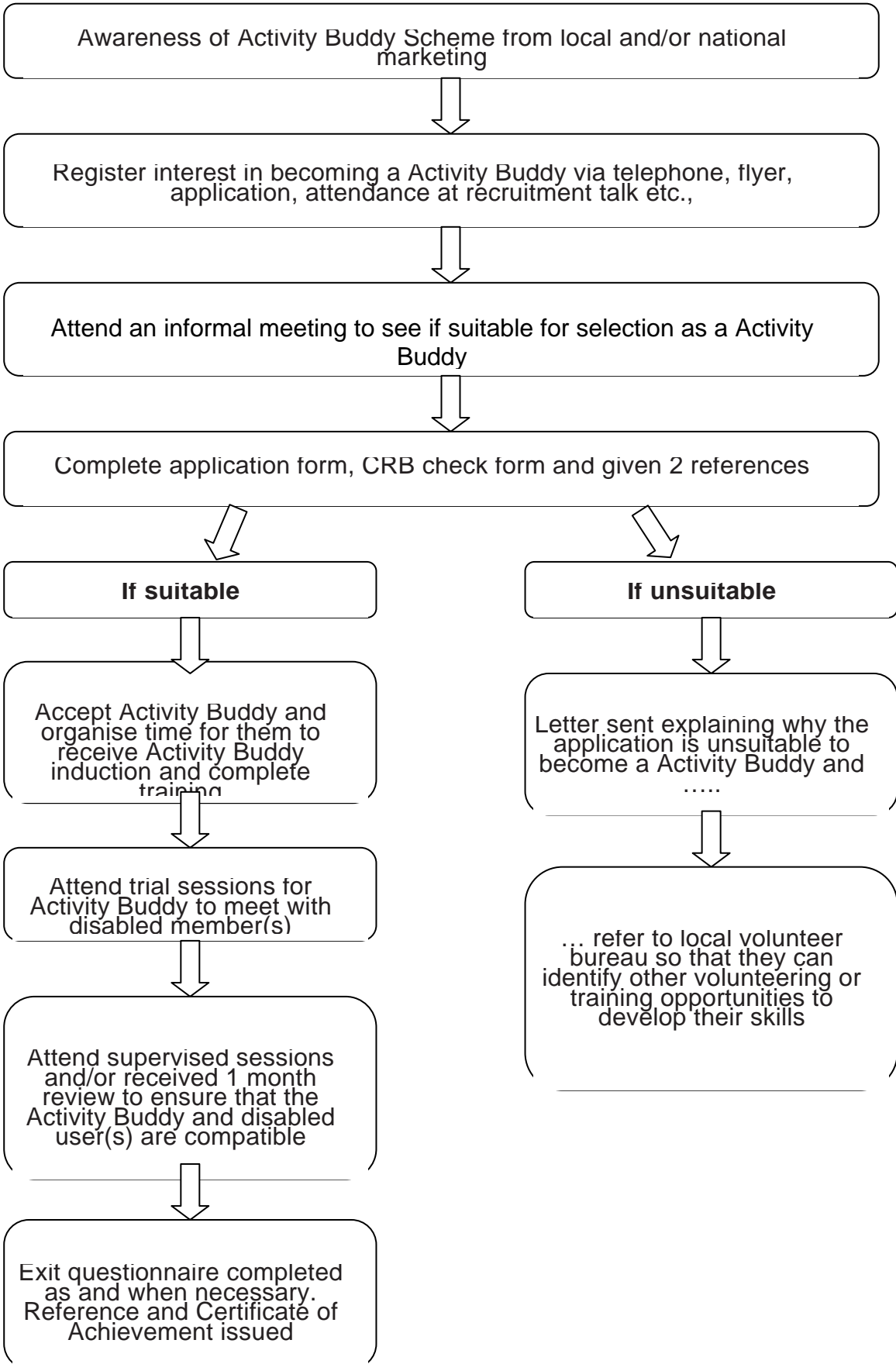
What is the role of an Activity Buddy Co-ordinator?

- To be the main contact for Activity Buddy's
- To select and recruit Activity Buddy's
- To coordinate the Activity Buddys' induction within the club/organisation
- To provide Activity Buddy's with training information; disability awareness fact sheets and assess their knowledge
- To introduce Activity Buddy's to other staff members
- To facilitate introduction of each Activity Buddy to disabled user(s) who require(s) further support/motivation
- To provide Activity Buddy's with ongoing support
- To monitor, evaluate and reward Activity Buddies
- To monitor information where applicable; numbers of Activity Buddies recruited and press coverage received.

Person Specification and Skill Requirements:

- Effective communication and interpersonal skills
- Approachable manner and a good listener
- Good organisational and delegation skills
- Ability to enthuse and motivate others
- Experience/knowledge of working with disabled people (desirable)

The Activity Buddy process:



What is an Activity Buddy?

It is important for an Activity Buddy Co-ordinator to recognise what it takes to be an Activity Buddy. Here is a brief outline:

- ✓ To receive and complete the Activity Buddy training
- ✓ To accompany and/or work out alongside disabled user(s) and provide additional support where necessary
- ✓ To provide the additional support during supervised training sessions or as and when required by the disabled participant (and when convenient for the Activity Buddy)
- ✓ To motivate, encourage, mentor and befriend a disabled person and support them in achieving their fitness goals
- ✓ To help break down barriers to participation for disabled people i.e. access, communication, social and psychological.

The Activity Buddy will not be expected:

- ✗ To lift and carry or transfer disabled users onto any equipment
- ✗ To provide transport or assist disabled users to change or personal care
- ✗ To prescribe exercise/training routines
- ✗ To assist with or administer medication

How many volunteers do I need?

This is very much dependant on your facility and whether you provide training sessions or have a constant flow of participants or members. You should firstly assess how many disabled users/members you have within your organisation that require assistance and how best to use your activity buddy resource to be most productive. Remember also that some disabled people have hidden disabilities that would benefit from assistance. Never assume, always ask. This is where posters placed

around your venue advertising this facility would be very useful as it relies on interested parties coming forward for more information.

If you do not have disabled members or you want to invite more disabled people into your facility, where can they be 'recruited' from? Contact your local voluntary centre to see what disability groups or older people day centres there are in your area and contact them to offer your services as an inclusive facility. Alternatively contact your regional development manager at the English Federation of Disability Sport (www.efds.co.uk). Click on the 'Regions' link on the website and then select your region from the left hand menu.

If you have regular weekly group sessions running you should be able to assess quite easily how many buddies you need per person depending on the disabled users' abilities and requirements. You may have a scenario where you have a number of disabled people who visit your facility/organisation on an irregular basis but have still require the support of an activity buddy. In this case it may be worth advertising 'assisted' fitness sessions if this is applicable to see if this would appeal to your disabled members and also entice more disabled users to try fitness/training sessions with activity buddies. You may find that from these sessions buddies hook up with disabled users and organise their own training times.

If you have disabled users/members who have asked for one-to-one support you can match them up and then, depending on your sporting/physical activity you can, following a brief supervisory period (see below) leave the disabled person and buddy to organise their own times and frequency where appropriate.

Past buddy schemes that have been run in a gym or fitness suite environment have realised that Activity Buddies do not necessarily want to volunteer for one hour periods at a time. If you do not have fixed training times this should be taken into consideration.

It may also be useful for you to create a 'training requirements' pro forma to assess the actual requirements of the disabled person prior to them starting training with you. This way you can match up the appropriate buddy prior to them starting, so that their very first and potentially nerve-wrecking training session is appropriately catered for and their experience is a positive one.

What motivates someone to become an Activity Buddy?

Every Activity Buddy or potential Activity Buddy will have different motivations for volunteering their time. After going through the whole marketing and recruitment process you want to be able to retain your Activity Buddies for as long as possible. For this you will need to assess and understand each person's motivations for volunteering. The fundamental principles of volunteering, which need to be considered are: choice, diversity, mutual benefit and recognition. These are listed in the Compact Code, www.thecompact.org.uk

You will need to decide what can be offered to your Activity Buddies as incentives, to meet their motivational needs and ensure they continue to volunteer their time and enjoy the experience.

Section 3 - Where to find Activity Buddies?

According to the Home Office Citizenship Survey 2003:

Around 18.8 million people were engaged in active community participation (civic participation, informal & formal volunteering) in 2001, compared to 20.3 million in 2003, a rise of more than one and a half million

11.1 million people involved in formal volunteering.....were most likely to be working in the following areas: sports & exercise (43%), hobbies, recreation, arts, social clubs (40%), children's education (37%), religion (37%)

According to a report commissioned by Do-It.org in July 2004:

Highest motivation for do-it.org.uk volunteers is wanting to help other people (23%), closely followed by wanting to try something new (18%) and improving their CV (17%.)

The most important aspect of the volunteering opportunity was that it was training in a future career (36%), closely followed by wanting to make a difference (27%).

Rewarding, challenging and interesting were the top three words used by do-it.org.uk users to describe their volunteering experience.

Finding volunteers

Below is a brief guide outlining some contacts you could use to recruit volunteers and in some cases receive further training guidelines:

County Sports Partnerships and Community Sports Networks

County Sports Partnerships (CSPs) are a partnership of agencies which are the backbone of regional sports provision. A number of community sports networks (CSNs) feed from the CSPs to provide sports and physical support on a more local level. It is part of the CSP's role to support people who coordinate or manage volunteers in a sports organisation or club. Both the CSPs and the CSNs will provide you with help in finding more volunteers and ensuring you make good use of them.

To locate your nearest County Sport Partnership go to the Sport England website (www.sportengland.org) click on 'Get Resources' then 'County Sports Partnerships' and at the bottom of the list is a 'CSP Contacts' section. You can then find the contact within your region.

Local Volunteer Centres

You will benefit from registering with the local volunteer centre. It is their role to put potential volunteers in touch with volunteering opportunities and promote your volunteering requirements to the local community. Volunteer centres can reach more people by networking with other local volunteer centres.

Find your local Volunteer Centre through the Do-it.org website: www.do-it.org.uk and go to 'need volunteers' and then enter your postcode to find your nearest volunteer bureau and register your organisation with them.

Do-It.org

This website is an incredibly useful tool for those organisations wanting to recruit volunteers. This website gives volunteers information relating to local volunteer opportunities relevant to their

interests ie, disability and/or sport for example. If your site is part of a larger organisation operating in 2 counties or more you can apply for the 'Online Poster System Account' – this must be applied for by Head Office but local logins can be provided. There is an annual subscription charge for this system.

If you are a local organisation with no national Head Office, your local volunteer centre can post opportunities on your behalf onto the site. You can visit www.do-it.org.uk and go to 'need volunteers' and then enter your postcode to find your nearest volunteer bureau and register your organisation with them.

Colleges & Universities

Nearly every University and a growing number of further education colleges have a student volunteering group. Most students find volunteering a very rewarding experience as it not only allows them to give something back to the local community but it also enhances their career prospects and allows them to be involved in the workplace and 'try out' various career options. Some courses also require students to volunteer to provide further credits to their overall final grade.

There are 2 potential pathways – either to contact the University's volunteer services (or similar) centre. They will have paid members of staff who deal with volunteer recruitment, development and training and it is their job to find new volunteer opportunities for their students.

Secondly, you could contact the relevant sports/physical education faculty at the local university. The University website will provide you with the contact information to either the volunteer services department or the appropriate sports faculty.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Many large national organisations promote employee involvement within the community as part of their corporate social responsibility programme. Marks and Spencer, Nationwide, BUPA and Sport England all provide volunteers nationally. Organisations with local branches, in particular those that have some involvement in sport or physical activity, close to your location can also be approached to promote the scheme and recruit regular volunteer commitment.

Business in the Community's Top UK 700 company members are committed to improving their positive impact on the community. Employee involvement within the community is part of their focus and through the 'Volunteering Plus' programme their employees can work towards a City & Guilds qualification and the company involved can identify increases in their own skills base. Everyone is a winner!!

To see what can be available to you either contact the Business in the Community website (www.bitc.org.uk) or the HR department of an organisation you are interested in working with.

Your own Organisation – recruiting from within

Where better to recruit volunteers from than from within your organisation? The people that access your centre/club/organisation already have an interest in going there and in the sport that you play. They are obviously interested in fitness and exercise and could potentially have a couple of hours a month to support a disabled person. Volunteers could even work out/train alongside them so they would not be missing out on their own exercise!

To recruit from within you may find it useful to create some leaflets and posters to put up around the site and also around the community. Your marketing tools could be displayed for example at disability

groups/organisations, volunteer bureaus, Local Authority Sports Development Officers and in doctor's surgeries, schools, libraries, places of worship, etc. Display them in locations that will not only attract your volunteer target audience but also raise awareness that you are a fully inclusive organisation which welcomes people with disabilities. Please ensure that any promotional literature is fully accessible (see details within the 'volunteering policy' below)

A press release to the local newspapers would certainly enhance your organisation's image and also drum up potential volunteers. If you are unsure of what to include in a press release see the enclosed details within this pack.

Also, Word of mouth is also very important and should not be undervalued as a source of volunteers. Once you have recruited your first Activity Buddy and they have had a rewarding experience, they might be able to recommend a friend to volunteer too. Likewise, once your Activity Buddies have proved to be successful and you have a number of satisfied disabled participants/members they could also let more people know. A successful Activity Buddy scheme will see participation increase within your organisation!

Diversity in Volunteering

Consider that the Activity Buddy may also have a disability and therefore require additional support to volunteer.

Disabled volunteers can potentially offer a great deal more to your disabled users than a non-disabled person could. Having a disabled person providing training and support to another disabled person in your club or facility promotes a very positive image of disabled people which is essential to a fully inclusive society. It also promotes your club or organisation as a fully inclusive environment and provides disabled people with another potential route into employment through volunteering and helps reduce social isolation.

The charity Scope offer an inclusive volunteering programme which is run nationally. They would be able to offer further advice on working with disabled volunteers or potentially provide your scheme with disabled volunteers. Contact the 'Inclusive Volunteering Programme' – contact details can be found on their website:

(www.scope.org.uk/support/volunteer)

Section 4 - Activity Buddy Recruitment Policy and Practice

It is strongly recommended that an application form, reference checks and a CRB (Criminal Records Bureau – see below) check is completed before Activity Buddies are appointed. This will ensure that you have all the relevant background information required to safely proceed with their volunteering. Not all applicants will be suitable. In some cases, the CRB and reference checks will divulge that the person may not be suitable for the role. In other cases, once they have learnt more about what being an Activity Buddy entails, the applicant may simply change their mind about wanting to volunteer for the role.

In either case, it should be noted that their skills and experience could be used more appropriately in another area therefore they should be referred to the local volunteer centre to find a more appropriate volunteering position.

Volunteering Policy

Having policies and good practice in place for the Activity Buddy Scheme will enable both the organisation and the Activity Buddy to feel secure in the Scheme. A volunteer policy will also provide an effective framework for the relationship between the Activity Buddy and the organisation, while demonstrating commitment to your volunteer Scheme and the Activity Buddies. It is therefore necessary that all members of staff, be they paid or volunteer, receive a copy of this policy. The elements of recruitment, induction and training, policies and good practice, supervision and support should all be included within this document.

Please ensure that your volunteer policy is an accessible document by writing the document in clear, uncomplicated English with no technical or legal jargon. It may also be necessary to translate some copies into

accessible formats (eg: large print, audio or including makaton symbols), or at least be able to provide these should they be required. For further information or details of where to have accessible formats created and printed please contact the relevant impairment specific organisation:

RNIB will give you details on accessible formats for people with visual impairments – www.rnib.org

Mencap will give you information relating to creating a document in an accessible format for people with learning disabilities – www.mencap.org.uk

The flexible nature of volunteering may require you to update your volunteer policy regularly, although it should not be necessary to update more often than yearly. This will give you an opportunity to redress what parts of the scheme are working and allow your volunteers to provide useful feedback to be included.

For further advice and support on how to write a volunteer policy for your organisation see the Volunteering England website (www.volunteeringengland.org).

CRB checks

You may potentially have your own process for CRB checking. If not, visit either www.crb.gov.uk or www.disclosure.gov.uk for further guidance. There are three different levels of CRB check and it is at the discretion of your organisation as to which level you opt for, however the 'standard disclosure' is recommended as a minimum. It may take some time for CRB checks to be returned, in which time you may wish to trial the Activity Buddy, under close and constant supervision.

Supervision sessions are a suitable way to involve your Activity Buddies and get the scheme up and running whilst CRB checks are being sourced. Supervised Activity Buddy sessions could be run on a regular basis at a convenient time for disabled members and Activity Buddies to meet and exercise together, if there is no fixed time each week for your club/organisation.

If a CRB check is returned and lists convictions, consider the following:

- Whether the conviction is relevant to the position
- The seriousness of the conviction
- The date of offence
- Pattern of convictions
- Circumstances – consider asking the prospective Activity Buddy about his/her conviction if this is appropriate. Please note, however, they are under no obligation to discuss this with you.

Once you have made the decision whether to appoint the Activity Buddy, you should not keep the CRB check on file. It is a highly confidential document and should be destroyed.

Please note that CRB checks are free of charge currently for all volunteers, provided that their job title is filled in as volunteer and they cross the 'volunteer' box on the back of the CRB form.

Reference checks

It is entirely appropriate that all volunteers complete an application form which should be kept to ensure you have their details and emergency contact numbers on file. The reference checks are important to establish that the Activity Buddy is who they say they are and will also give you a clear indication as to their suitability for the role. It is important that all references are followed up to a satisfactory degree and all reference details are kept in the Buddy's file.

Insurance

Insurance is vital for anyone undertaking volunteering. Therefore, if appropriate, Activity Buddies should be added to your existing employer's liability insurance. Policies should explicitly mention volunteers, as they may not automatically be covered. Ensure that your insurance company is aware of the type of work and activities the Activity Buddies will be doing. If relevant provide them with the 'Activity Buddy Role Description'. Let them know what Activity Buddies are expected to do and the safeguards that are being put in place to ensure their involvement is carried out safely, from appointment and training to ongoing supervision. Make it clear that you have full and proper health and safety and other appropriate policies and procedures in place - for example risk assessments and CRB checks.

For further advice and guidance about insurance for volunteers visit:

- www.volunteering.org.uk/missions.php?id=612
- www.askncvo.org.uk

Health & Safety and risk assessments

It is essential to ensure that Activity Buddies and disabled clients do not suffer injury or loss to themselves or other people, while involved in the Activity Buddy scheme within your organisation. There is a duty of care from your site to protect users of the facility and volunteers participating in the scheme. This obligation is fulfilled through the process of carrying out a risk assessment, and ensuring that activity Buddies are aware of Health and Safety procedures and policies. If you are providing one, it is worth considering including your health and safety policy within the induction pack you provide for your volunteer.

It is strongly recommended that risk assessments and evacuation policies are revised to ensure that all impairment groups are recognised and safe to participate.

Grievance Procedure

In the event that there are problems with Activity Buddies and/or the disabled person they are buddying, you should have a grievance procedure in place. Ensure that Activity Buddies are aware of the grievance procedure and that you follow the procedure consistently.

If you are not an organisation with paid members of staff, and do not have a grievance procedure as such in place, it is important to remember that when dealing with conflict ensure that you listen to both sides of the story and mediate as best you can. The problem should not be avoided, as it won't go away! Make sure that you have clear procedures in place to deal with complaints by or about your volunteers.

Confidentiality

Be aware that your volunteers are bound by the same confidentiality terms as your paid members of staff. This helps promote a professional environment and will be helpful in calming potential fears from the organisation's disabled clients.

Expenses

It is recommended that your policy includes paying the Activity Buddy out of pocket expenses if they are relevant and appropriate i.e., bus/train tickets or a mileage allowance, (receipts should be provided). Your policy on expenses should be clarified at the very beginning with the volunteer to ensure you are both clear. It is also worthwhile creating and implementing an expense form for the volunteer to complete and attach

relevant receipts to. This could also be included in the initial agreement between the organisation and the Activity Buddy.

You can apply for grants to reimburse the costs you pay out to the volunteers. (See section 6 – ‘funding’)

Expenses and State Benefits

People volunteering while on benefits are not affected by claiming back expenses. According to Volunteering England “All benefits rulings agree that voluntary work is work for a not-for-profit organisation, or work for someone who is not a member of your family, where only reasonable expenses are paid.” Provided those rules are not broken volunteers will be able to claim benefit and appropriate out of pocket expenses. It is also worth noting that only actual expenses can be claimed ie: not rounded up to the nearest pound. Expenses can be paid in advance but full and complete receipts must be provided and any unspent monies must be repaid.

Those people on Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) must still be able to prove that they are actively seeking and available for work.

It is for the above reasons that all expenses should be accounted for and appropriate forms created and completed by the volunteer. If there is then any question of stopping benefits the organisation has proof that the monies claimed were actual expenses and not payment. Neither party, however is under any obligation to advise the Department of Work and Pensions that someone is volunteering.

Please also be advised that asylum seekers and people on low incomes may still want to volunteer but cannot afford to pay out a bus fare to get to your site and wait for the recompense. Is there a possibility for advances in expenses, again providing full receipts can be shown?

Further information and guidance can be found in the Volunteering England website (www.volunteering.org.uk), or by contacting the Department of Work and Pensions (www.dwp.gov.uk).

Section 5 - Once you have your volunteers...?

You may feel that you want to have an open session or presentation for a group of potential Activity Buddies, depending on the response received from the marketing, awareness and recruitment activities carried out. The presentation used to train Activity Buddies is available and can be adapted for this purpose – please contact the AABs Project Manager if this is required.

Induction of Activity Buddies

It is important that the Activity Buddy is inducted effectively into their role, to ensure that their experience of volunteering is fulfilling through the provision of adequate training, support and supervision.

It may be helpful to complete a volunteer agreement between yourself and the organisation, to make both parties aware of their obligations.

Training Resources

The 'How to be an Activity Buddy' Resource contains a section on Disability Awareness which is a suitable introduction for all volunteers into understanding disability and how to gain confidence through knowing how to communicate with disabled people with specific impairments. This resource is also available online, on the EFDS website (www.efds.co.uk)

Buddying Up – The matching process

Once the Activity Buddy has completed their induction and training, they should have a better understanding of disability issues and feel confident to buddy a disabled user.

From the discussions you have with the disabled member/user you will be able to get a good idea of what their fitness goals are. Try to match up Buddies of similar ages and motivations i.e. it might not be wise to match a casual participant/member with an aspiring paralympian! Try to match Buddies with the same goals, interests and time available to use the organisation. Your initial discussion with the disabled person should include assessing:

- a) if the disabled person requires any additional support or motivation to exercise and;
- b) what support they require.

If your training sessions are not already supervised it would certainly be beneficial to provide supervised Activity Buddy sessions either on an ongoing basis or just while CRB Checks are being carried out.

A taster session for the Activity Buddy will ensure they are comfortable with what their role entails whilst either being accompanied by a senior member of your organisation or the Activity Buddy co-ordinator. This will also provide an opportunity for the disabled person and the Activity Buddy to get to know each other and then arrange times convenient to them to meet and train together if your organisation or club does not have a regular meeting time.

You should also be prepared for a mismatch of Activity Buddy and participant and be ready to start the process again if they do not hit it off together. However through the process of supervised Activity Buddy sessions this problem can be alleviated.

Section 6 - Funding

How much do you need?

Cost implications should be very low. Time is the major cost of ensuring a buddy scheme is set up and run correctly. It is possible that, depending on your start up situation, it could take at least 6 months to get buddies recruited and trained and also disabled people made aware of your excellent inclusive volunteer scheme. Effective marketing and awareness campaigns will reduce the time it takes to get the scheme successfully up and running.

It should be noted that volunteers are well within their rights to be recompensed for their expenses. You must also take into account potential further expenses, for example, it may be motivational for buddies to wear a t-shirt or some form of distinctive clothing that illustrates their position. This will prove motivational for the buddies and also will identify the buddy to the disabled person.

Also consider the potential costs involved when using disabled volunteers. It may be essential for them to use an interpreter, for example, or have their own assistant who will also need to have their expenses reimbursed. Scope can provide some assistance with these costs and there is also the possibility of a National Government fund being introduced to help get more disabled people into volunteering so watch this space!!

How to access funding

There are various community-based funds which can be accessed. Check your local CVS or funding search engines (see below) which can alert you to your specific required funds.

A great source of funding information is the internet as there are now many websites which contain funders information. There are many sites however that charge for searches but there are also some excellent free search sites. In each case all you need to do is enter your search parameters and you should be able to locate some suitable funders.

Please see the following websites:



Fit 4 Funding – www.fit4funding.org.uk

j4b Grants – www.j4b.co.uk - (to receive free funding newsletter and personalised grant alerts)

GRANTnet – www.grantnet.com

Government Funding – www.governmentfunding.org.uk

Lottery Funding – www.lotteryfunding.org.uk

Section 7 - A Successful Activity Buddy Scheme

How to Retain Activity Buddies

Hopefully, once the Activity Buddy Scheme is well-established, you will have successfully recruited a number of Activity Buddies and the work they are doing is motivating and rewarding. However it is important to ensure that the motivations and reasons why the Activity Buddy volunteered in the first place are still being met. It is also very important to continue to make them feel welcome, useful, valued and part of the team and encourage them to stay involved. Why waste all the energy and time you have taken so far?!!

Activity Buddy incentives

There are tangible and intangible ways of valuing the Activity Buddies' commitment and their reasons for wanting to be an Activity Buddy. The intangible value and reason for volunteering will cost your organisation nothing. With tangible incentives avoid payments in return for the Activity Buddy's volunteer work. Check that any concessions made i.e., volunteer for 6 months and get a free membership could not be misconstrued as a contract of employment with the volunteer – refer to 'Volunteers and the Law' (a guide written by Volunteering England – you can read a summary online at www.volunteering.org.uk).

You may want to consider a combination of the following tangible and intangible incentives as part of your policy for recruiting and retaining Activity Buddies:

Activity Buddy tangible support and incentives offered
Reduction in membership fees whilst volunteering
Work experience
References
Travel expenses (refer to Section 4 – Expenses)
Related training
Reduction in price of training sessions
Can provide points towards the completion of a sports course/award.

Activity Buddy intangible support and incentives offered
Friendship and social aspects
Motivation to attend more regularly
Escapism from regular routine
Learn new skills; assisting and communicating with disabled people
Chance to make a difference to a disabled person’s life
Work experience; new skills to enable them to gain employment

Recognition of Activity Buddies

Consider the following when recognising the work the Activity Buddies are doing, to ensure that they remain committed to their role as an Activity Buddy:

Motivation

What will motivate your Activity Buddies to continue volunteering?

- Their initial motivations for volunteering are still being met
- They have built a rapport with the disabled person they are buddying and they know that they are making a difference to that person's life
- They are presented with new challenges and opportunities
- They enjoy being a Activity Buddy
- Someone takes notice of their work and tells them they are doing a good job

Motivation to continue volunteering is very rarely financially based. Activity Buddies will more than likely be retained because of the relationship and confidence they are building for themselves and the disabled person they are buddying.

Training

The initial induction and training of new Activity Buddies is an important process to ensure that they are comfortable within their role and feels valued as a volunteer. Further training may be required to enable the Activity Buddy to support the disabled member more effectively: -

- Further Disability Awareness Training. Contact the English Federation of Disability Sport Training manager for further information. (www.efds.co.uk)
- You may also wish to source impairment specific training for your Activity Buddies provided by the relevant disability charities or National Disability Sport Organisations.
- First Aid Training
- Sports specific training or further qualifications.
- Running Sport, National Governing Bodies of Sport coaching courses or other sports partnership courses.

Delegate

You may have recruited Activity Buddies who are also qualified Instructors/coaches and who may even have received other health/fitness specific qualifications. In which case, you may be able to task them with prescribing further exercise for their Buddy or assisting in coaching sessions.

Alternatively or in addition, you may wish to delegate the coordination and induction of new activity Buddies to an existing Activity Buddy, who has the skills and experience to do this.

Communicate

To ensure that your Activity Buddies feel valued, it is important that you communicate with them regularly. Make sure that they feel part of the team and encourage their ideas and feedback. Praise them if they are doing a good job. This communication may be formalised in the Activity Buddy review session and also through internal communication activities e.g. internal newsletters or staff bulletins, IFI Newsletter, Inclusive Sport magazine etc.,

Activity Buddy Review

It is recommended that an Activity Buddy Review form is created and completed one month after the induction of an Activity Buddy and then quarterly from then on. Getting the Activity Buddy to complete the form, should help you to establish whether the Activity Buddy has settled into their role and feels happy and fulfilled with the activities they are undertaking. If you do not wish for them to complete the form you can use the questions therein to form the basis of an informal chat, however the written responses of the Activity Buddy can be kept on file and used for future monitoring purposes.

The disabled person who is being buddied should also complete a review one month on, to also ensure that their needs are being met by the Activity Buddy and your Activity Buddy Scheme. Any dissatisfactions and potential conflicts should be spotted at this point. Likewise with the Activity Buddy, if you feel a form to fill out is not appropriate it is still worth using the questions on this document as a basis for an informal chat.

Problems and Dealing with Conflict

In the event that there are problems with Activity Buddies and/or the disabled person they are buddying, you should follow a grievance procedure similar to that of paid members of staff. Ensure that Activity Buddies are aware of the grievance procedure and that you follow the procedure consistently.

If you are not an organisation with paid members of staff, and do not have a grievance procedure as such in place, it is important to remember that when dealing with the situation ensure that you listen to both sides of the story and mediate as best you can. The problem or conflict should not be avoided, as it won't go away!

Rewarding Volunteers

Most of the recognition for Activity Buddies mentioned above is intangible and relates more to the personal benefits that the Activity Buddy receives in assisting a disabled member. It's easy to give intangible rewards to your Activity Buddies.

Consider more:

- Praise
- Acknowledgement of their work within newsletters/ noticeboards
- Listening to their ideas
- Smiling and calling them by their name
- Organising social activities to include both staff and volunteers
- Set up an 'Activity Buddy of the Month' scheme

You may also wish to reward your activity Buddies with something more tangible to recognise their efforts and good work.

Here is a list of rewards you could consider to help your Activity Buddy feel valued: -

- Branded Activity Buddy T-shirts
- PR in local paper or IFI Newsletter/website etc., about their work
- Photographs
- Birthday and Christmas Cards
- Thank you cards/ Certificates (see 8.2 Resource)
- Reduced Membership/ Personal training sessions etc.,
- Awards

There are many local, county and national Award Schemes, which are intended specifically for volunteers. You may wish to nominate Activity Buddies for any these Awards:

- IFI National Awards
- Nationwide DSE Sports Awards
- CSV Make a Difference Day Awards; www.csv.org.uk
- Year of the Volunteer Awards; www.yearofthevolunteer.org
- Student Volunteering Awards; www.heacf-awards.org.uk
- Employee Volunteer Award Programmes
www.employeevolunteering.org.uk
- Queen's Award for Voluntary Service;
www.goldenjubilaeaward.gov.uk
- UK Charity Awards – Volunteer of the Year and Young Volunteer of the Year; www.charitytimes.com
- Nationwide Community Awards; www.nationwide.co.uk

Local volunteer recognition awards can also be sourced via County Sports Partnerships and local authorities.

Monitoring - What to Monitor

Monitoring is an important element in any project which is trying to identify the benefit of its process. It may be useful therefore when delivering the Activity Buddy Scheme to monitor the following:

- monitor the numbers of Activity Buddies trained and utilised.
- collect Activity Buddy Review forms and the Disabled Persons review to monitor the impact of the Activity Buddy Scheme.
- collect copies of press articles about the activities of your sites Activity Buddy Scheme.
- Monitor the increased number of disabled members in your organisation who have joined due to/since the inception of the Activity Buddy Scheme.
- Find out where new members have come from and why they have joined your club/organisation.

It is recommended that you keep a personnel file on each Activity Buddy which will include the recruitment information i.e., application form, references, review forms etc., so that information is easily referred to.

It will be useful to keep monitoring information throughout the Activity Buddy Scheme process if you intend to apply for further funding or awards related to volunteering.

If you are interested in acquiring the 'Investing in Volunteers Award' for your commitment to involving volunteers within your organisation. See

www.investinginvolunteers.org.uk for the good practice standards and indicators. A lot of the criteria is already covered within this Pack.

Involving volunteers also counts towards your ClubMark accreditation.

Activity Buddy Leavers

Through regular reviews of the work of the Activity Buddy, you can hopefully ensure that once Activity Buddies are recruited and trained, they are retained for as long as possible. This process will hopefully ensure that the reasons for leaving are not due to a lack of support or recognition from your organisation or from the Scheme.

Nonetheless, Activity Buddies will leave for a number of reasons. It might be useful for your future reports to use an exit questionnaire – to see if there is any pattern forming as to why Activity Buddies are leaving. By identifying such patterns, the scheme will be able to eliminate any obvious problems, which are causing Activity Buddies to leave the scheme.

Finally, a Thank You Certificate and reference should be given to Activity Buddy leavers so that they have a record of their voluntary work and number of hours of commitment to the Activity Buddy Scheme. The reference can be used should they wish to volunteer elsewhere, and also as a potential reference to support a job application. Remember, volunteering is an excellent pathway to finding a job!

Bibliography

- Recognising and Rewarding Sports Unsung Heroes and Heroines – The Volunteers, Running Sport, Sport England, 2005
- Volunteering with Bolton Metro – Staff Toolkit Information and Procedures, Bolton Metro Education and Culture, 2005
- “Disability Equality Training Candidate Resource Pack – English Federation of Disability Sport: Inclusive Training, 2007
- Volunteers: How I can recruit, retain, recognise and reward volunteers? Running Sport, Sport England, 2005
- From Barriers to Bridges – A Guide for Volunteer Involving Organisations; For Everyone Who Works with Volunteer The National Centre for Volunteering, 2001
- <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/missions.php?id=612>
- www.bitc.org.uk
- www.camdenvb.org.uk/downloads/Insurance9.doc
- At-A-Glance, Running Sport, Sport England, 2005
- Get it Right from the Start, Volunteer Policies – the key to diverse volunteer involvement; For Everyone Who Works with Volunteers, The National Centre for Volunteering, 2002
- Compact Code of Good Practice, Volunteering, The Compact, 1998
- Volunteers and the Law, Mark Renstall, Volunteering England, 2005
- “Volunteering in the Public Services: Health & Social Care” Baroness Neuberger’s review as the Governments Volunteering Champion March 2008
- National Autistic Society ‘Prospects’ communication Tips for interviewing people with autism or Asperger syndrome, when speaking with ASD on the telephone & communicating with individuals with Autism & Asperger Syndrome
- Faith, religion and Philosophy from the Interfaith Network for the UK