

## Notes from the Volunteering for Food Projects Webinar

In a Mentimeter activity, we asked the attendees:

What are the key qualities you would like your food project to have, when it comes to volunteers? E.g. supportive, empowering.

17 responses



### Training

The CAS Food Team mentioned there is currently available funding in each district for food projects to build resilience and help them to become more sustainable in the long-run. As such, these funding pots are a perfect route to accessing any training you or your project's volunteers have been wanting to do.

- To see more information on the available funding pots in Ipswich, West Suffolk, East Suffolk, and Babergh & Mid Suffolk, along with links to guidance documents and application forms, and contact details for the relevant food team officers for each fund, [click here](#).

We asked what training the attendees have found useful in the past. Here is some of the training that was mentioned:

- Dementia Awareness
- Mental Health First Aid
- Suicide Awareness training
  - We just wanted to share this [free suicide awareness training](#) from the Zero Suicide Alliance which you might be interested in doing.
- Food Hygiene training
- First Aid
  - [East Anglian Air Ambulance offers free CPR training](#)

Some of the areas people wanted to access training for included:

- Safeguarding
- Health & Safety
- Package of training around roles & responsibilities, defining a role, managing others, organizing the day
- Boundaries & dealing with difficult situations / inappropriate conversations
- How to co-produce with volunteers
- Celebrating volunteers in a budget-friendly way

Kerry and Louise from the CAS Volunteering Team shared lots of helpful information about the resources we have on offer at Community Action Suffolk, and how the current offer fits in with some of the areas food projects are wanting more training in.

#### **Core Training Offer:**

- **Let's Talk network events:** These are with the volunteering team, usually online, and are networking events for people who look after volunteers.
- **Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) support:**  
ESV is where employers give their staff paid time off to undertake volunteering activities. Sometimes employers look for opportunities for groups to volunteer.
  - Louise can help match organisations with employers, and vice versa. If you'd like to find out more, get in touch with Louise:
  - Phone: 01473 345372
  - Email: [louise.biddiscombe@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](mailto:louise.biddiscombe@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk)
- **Volunteer Leadership training** – consists of 3 courses:
  - Volunteer journey: plan, include, support, celebrate
  - Volunteers and the law
  - Managing challenging situations involving volunteers
  - The leadership courses can be undertaken individually as standalone courses, currently priced at £40pp. If you complete all three as standalone sessions, you can then receive the volunteer leadership handbook.
  - Currently trialling running as a suite across 6 weeks, at a reduced cost of £90 for all 3 courses. This is courses on a fixed date and is non refundable: 11th Feb, 25th Feb, 11th March. 5 places remaining.
- A new course to look out for over the coming year is 'Successful Volunteer Recruitment'.

Kerry encouraged working together more, as face-to-face training works well for most, delivery is the challenge to gain the numbers.

### **Volunteer Suffolk:**

- [Volunteer Suffolk](#) is completely free to use to advertise for volunteers, and it has many other functions which can be used to really enhance your volunteering offer.
- Organisations can partner with each other on the platform so a volunteer can then see opportunities across organisations that are partnered with each other, e.g running clubs in a district might choose to partner so that marshals can see opportunities at running events run by any of those running clubs.
- Partnering with other organisations, endorsing each other and promoting each other's roles – it might be that volunteers have more capacity and would like to do more.
- VS can enable volunteers to see all what is available to help on different days, if they wish to do more.
- Note that it would be good to have a session at some point to go through using Volunteer Suffolk – this is something CAS is planning to host soon, so we recommend joining as a CAS member to be updated on this (see below). There is also a toolkit and 1 hr online webinar to support with this.
- Volunteers should be encouraged to upload their skills and certifications as this can help tailor roles to their skill sets.

**Training and Events:** To stay in the loop with any training offered at CAS, we recommend [joining our network](#). This way, you'll receive regular newsletters with updates from the different teams at CAS. You can change your preferences to receive specific updates, so that your communications are tailored to your own needs.

**Volunteering Support:** If you're ever stuck and need a bit of advice around volunteering, our CAS Volunteering Team is always happy to help! To chat to someone from the team, you can send an email to: [volunteering@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk)

We also discussed some tips for different areas of volunteering needs:

#### **1) Volunteering for those with high level support needs**

- Make sure that your organisation has the right training to be able to support volunteers with high level support needs, such as lacking confidence, has been socially isolated, mental health concerns.

- Recognise when your organisation can't meet these needs and perhaps signpost to other organisations.
- Consider internal volunteer mentoring/buddy scheme.

## **2) How to engage with work experience/student placements**

- One project spoke about how their organisation often works with work experience and student placements, with students from colleges who need a certain number of hours (e.g. 100 hours) of experience to finish their course (e.g. Psychology).
- Placements could include developing skills around having conversations with people and offering support, not just the day-to-day activities of running a food project.