# Sample interview questions at assessment

## Guidance on style

You should construct your questions in your own words and phraseology, so the interview has a natural feel. You do not want to make the interview come across as very formal.

Often interviewees will provide lots of information spontaneously, so if they have already answered something you were planning on asking them, there is no need to ask again.

You don't have to ask every volunteer all of the questions as long as you feel you have enough evidence to cover all of the relevant practices. For larger assessments you may choose to focus on different things in different interviews, especially volunteer interviews, for example you might just ask newer volunteers about the recruitment and induction process, but explore in more depth, or you might ask longer standing volunteers about support and opportunities for development.

Below are some example questions to give you an idea of the things you might ask – you might need to mix and match questions from different sections to suit different organisational structures. These questions are also provided in separate stakeholder handouts for assessors as a tool to aid note-taking but please be careful that you are not tempted to use them in a rigid and inflexible way.

## Volunteer questions

1. How did you find out about the opportunity to volunteer with XXX? Do you feel that the organisation is promoted in a way that welcomes a diverse range of volunteers? (3.1, 3.2)
2. What sort of information was available to you to help you decide if XXX was the organisation you wanted to volunteer with? (4.1)
3. What 'process' did you go through to become a volunteer? (4.2)
4. Did you have the opportunity to discuss if volunteering with XXX would satisfy your motivations to become involved? (4.3)
5. What sort of induction did you have? (4.4)
6. Are you given equipment and any other resources you need to undertake your role? Can you claim expenses? (1.4)
7. How does what you do as a volunteer help XXX to achieve its mission/goals/aims? Or do you know how your role fits in with what the organisation does (1.2, 1.3)
8. Who is responsible for volunteering in XXX; who is your 'go to' person? (2.3)
9. What kind of support do they offer you? Have you been able to raise any issues you've had? Is there a formal process for raising issues? (5.1, 2.5)
10. Is there a set of guidelines or policies that you have to follow? Did you get copies, or can you access them if you want to? (2.1)
11. What guidance has XXX given you around keeping yourself safe? (2.4)

12. Does the organisation give you feedback about how you are doing? (If no, is this something you would like?) Do you get feedback about how your volunteering makes a difference? Do you find your volunteering meaningful and rewarding? Is there anything further the organisation could do to make your volunteering more satisfying? (5.3, 6.1)
13. Do you get opportunities to develop and learn, through formal training or through learning from peers? If you have specific goals, does XXX support you to achieve these? Do you have opportunities to suggest areas for training or learning? (6.3, 6.4, 6.5)
14. Do you have the opportunity to meet up with other volunteers, either socially or as part of the work or learning? (If no is this something you would like?) (6.4)
15. Do you feel you've had the opportunity to bring your skills and experience to the role? Are there opportunities to change or adapt roles to fit with your interests and situation? (6.3, 3.3)
16. What opportunities do you have to give XXX feedback about your experience, or to make comments and suggestions about how things might be improved? Have you been involved in reviewing volunteering systems and processes? (5.4, 1.1)
17. … Do you feel you are able to influence decision making? (5.4)
18. Overall how would you describe communication between yourself and the organisation? (5.5)
19. To what extent do you feel a valued member of the organisation? What sort of things does the organisation do that makes you feel valued/appreciated/recognised? What does the organisation do to make you feel a part of it? (1.2, 6.2)
20. What do you think the organisation does well? (General question)
21. Is there anything that you think could be improved? (General question)

## Trustee and senior manager questions

1. What do you feel volunteers bring to the organisation; how do they help you to fulfil your aims and objectives? (1.1, 1.2)
2. What impact does the involvement of volunteers have, for example what would be lost if there were no volunteers involved? How is that impact reviewed and evaluated? How is it communicated? (1.3)
3. Tell me about how you go about organisational planning; is volunteering considered as part of that? What aims or objectives do you have that include volunteers? (1.4)
4. How do you consider the resourcing needed to involve volunteers? (1.4)
5. Who in the organisation is responsible for ensuring that volunteering is in line with best practice? How are they supported in that role? How does the board hear from the volunteering team? (2.3)
6. Is volunteering reflected in organisational policies; how are those policies reviewed and signed off? (2.1, 2.2)
7. How does the organisation seek to ensure volunteering is attractive and available to as wide an audience as possible? (3.1, 3.4)
8. How are volunteers made to feel a part of the organisation? Are there opportunities for them to give feedback or input to decision making? Are there any direct lines of communication between the board and the volunteers? (6.2, 5.4, 5.5)

9. How is their contribution acknowledged and recognised? Do trustees get involved? (6.1, 6.2, 6.3)
10. What do you hope volunteers gain from their involvement? How do you know whether volunteers are getting this? (6.1, 6.5)
11. What are you most proud of in relation to volunteering in your organisation? (General question)
12. Is there anything that you would like to improve? (General question)
13. What future plans do you have for future development of volunteering and volunteers? (1.1, 1.4)

## Manager questions*

1. How do the volunteer roles contribute to XXX's overall mission? How is their contribution reflected in organisational plans? How do you ensure that everyone in XXX is mindful of what tasks are appropriate for volunteers? (1.1, 5.2)
2. How do you evaluate the impact of volunteer involvement? How is that information shared across the organisation, including to volunteers themselves (1.2, 1.3)
3. How is volunteer involvement considered in terms of resource planning - budgets, equipment, and staff time? (1.4)
4. What policies/procedures/processes are in place to manage volunteer involvement? How are these reviewed; how frequently? How do people access these? How do you make sure that everyone who needs to be aware of them, is aware of them? (2.1, 2.2)
5. In particular how do you manage risks around volunteer involvement and make sure that everyone stays safe? (2.4)
6. How do you ensure that people responsible for managing volunteers are up to date with the latest thinking around best practice in volunteering; how do they keep their skills and knowledge up to date? What support is available for them? (2.3)
7. If volunteers raise issues or if issues are raised about volunteers, how are these dealt with; what is the formal procedure? (2.5)
8. How are volunteers' records kept? (2.6)
9. Thinking about bringing new volunteers into the organisation, how do you ensure that as wide a cross section of the community as possible is made aware of the opportunity to volunteer with you? Why is it important to XXX to have a diverse volunteer team? How have you targeted recruitment to address any areas of under-representation? Have you had to make any changes to how you portray volunteering, or the roles you have on offer, in order to attract different people? (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4)
10. How do you make sure people understand the roles you have on offer? How does your recruitment process support the prospective volunteer in exploring if the role(s) is right for them? (4.1, 4.3)
11. How do you ensure that your recruitment process is as straightforward as possible and is applied consistently and fairly? (4.2)
12. What induction do you provide for new volunteers, and how do you ensure that it meets their needs? (4.4)

13. How are volunteers supported and how do you make sure your approaches meet their needs? How do you give feedback to volunteers about how they are doing? And how are volunteers able to give feedback about their experience of volunteering with XXX? What opportunities are there for volunteers to be involved in decision making? (5.1, 5.3, 5.4)
14. What approaches do you have to communicating with volunteers, and how do you know if they are meeting volunteers' needs? (5.5)
15. How do you know that volunteers find their roles meaningful and rewarding; that they feel a part of the organisation? (6.1, 6.2)
16. How do you make use of the experience, skills and talents that volunteers bring to XXX? What opportunities do you provide for them to develop their skills? In what ways are you able to support their wider aspirations? (6.3, 6.5)
17. How are volunteers able to connect with peers and what can they gain from that experience? (6.4)
18. When volunteers leave, how do you manage that process? (5.6)
19. What are you most proud of in relation to volunteering in your organisation? (General question)
20. Is there anything that you would like to improve? (General question)
21. What future plans do you have for future development of volunteering and volunteers? (1.1, 1.4)

## Supervisor questions*

1. How do volunteers contribute to your area of work? What difference do they make? (1.2, 1.3)
2. How is volunteering considered when you are planning work? What budgetary and staffing considerations are there in relation to involving volunteers in your area of work? (1.1, 1.4)
3. Why do you think people choose to volunteer with XXX; what do you imagine they hope to get out of the experience? Does the organisation attract a broad range of different people? What scope is there to adapt roles, or create new roles to attract a wider range of people? (3.1, 3.3, 6.1)
4. What specific policies and procedures are in place to guide you in relation to supervising the work of volunteers? Who supports you in the role? (2.1, 2.2, 2.3)
5. How do you ensure the safety and wellbeing of volunteers and everyone affected by your work? (2.4)
6. Are there some things it wouldn't be appropriate to involve volunteers in? How do you establish and check that volunteers adhere to boundaries? (5.2)
7. When problems arise either in relation to issues raised by the volunteers you supervise, or about them, what is the formal process to address these? (2.5)
8. What are the main ways that you communicate with volunteers? What support do you offer them, and how do you check if that is meeting their needs? Are there opportunities for them to connect with other volunteers? (5.1, 5.5, 6.4)
9. How do you help volunteers to feel a part of the organisation? What opportunities are there for them to input ideas and suggestions, be part of decision making? What opportunities are there for them to develop their skills and experience? If they have longer term aspirations,

what support are you able to provide? What feedback do you give them about how they are doing? (6.2, 5.4, 6.3, 6.5, 5.3)

10. How is what volunteers do acknowledged and recognised within the organisation? (6.1, 6.2)

## Others not working closely with volunteers questions

1. How do you think volunteers contribute to the work of XXX? What difference do they make? (1.2, 1.3)
2. Why do you think people choose to volunteer with XXX? What do you think, or hope they get out of it? How are they made to feel a part of the organisation? (6.1, 6.2)
3. Is there a good mix of volunteers? Do you feel the opportunities would appeal to lots of different people? Do you know how opportunities to volunteer are promoted - have you seen any publicity? (3.1, 3.2, 3.3)
4. Who has overall responsibility for volunteering in XXX? How do they help to make sure things run smoothly? (2.3, 2.2)
5. How is what volunteers do acknowledged and recognised within the organisation? (6.1, 6.2)

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* You will need to consider which questions from the Manager and Supervisor examples best fit the job roles in the organisation you are assessing. For example, in smaller organisations there might just be one person responsible for volunteering and therefore you will be drawing from both sets; in larger organisations volunteer supervisors might have those responsibilities as part of a wider job role with a central team undertaking much of the volunteer management therefore you would not expect them to have detailed knowledge.