

Recruiting committee members

Most local deaf children's societies are run by parents of deaf children, which means committee members are passionate, enthusiastic, but often busy. This can result in the committee feeling pressured into taking too much on; or groups not doing as much as they would like.

How do you recruit committee members? Have you considered looking outside your group?

Many charities recruit trustees and volunteers who aren't also beneficiaries, and NDCS believes that local groups could do this whilst retaining their ethos and commitment to supporting deaf children, young people and their families. It could help you share the workload. It could bring in new ideas and enthusiasm. It could help you fill skills gaps in your existing committee.

Here are some suggestions.

Step one: identify existing gaps

Think about what you have as a committee, and what might be missing. This can help you to target your recruitment. As individuals, and as a committee, you might want to ask yourselves:

- are there families in your area not represented in your group, and/or whose needs your group is currently not meeting? (eg. age, religion, ethnicity, language)
- are there roles on your committee that are not currently filled? (You should have a Chair, Treasurer and Secretary; after that, it's up to you what would be useful)
- are there skills or knowledge that your committee needs but does not have? (If you're not sure, you can complete our short skills assessment to find out)
- how many committee members would be ideal? You need enough to make the workload manageable, but not so many that decision-making becomes difficult

Step two: write a role description

It doesn't have to be extensive, but it's useful to have something so that potential volunteers can see if they fit what you are looking for. You could include:

- desired skills and experience
- approximate time commitment (eg. one hour a week, 4 hours a month, 6 events a year)
- a description of your group, its aims, its activities
- what you can offer the volunteer in return (eg. travel expenses, lunch, a reference)

Step three: agree the recruitment process

Before you advertise your vacancy, you will need to think about:

- how applicants apply eg. an application form, a CV, an email, a phone call, a chat
- who will be the contact person? Make sure they are happy to have their email address/ phone number advertised. Or give them access to your group email address/ phone
- the deadline. (It's usually good to have a deadline, because people tend to work up to them! You can always extend it if you need to.)

Step four: advertising your vacancy

Make your advert eye-catching. Make it obvious who you are and what you do, for example by including a photo of deaf children (don't forget to ask permission first). Include the role description, deadline, and what action you would like applicants to take. If you are looking to target a particular audience, think about what will appeal to them. If there is someone within that group you can ask to help with the design or proofing, do.

Advertising online

If you have a website, put something eye catching on your home page, with a link to further information. You can also put something on your group's webpage on the NDCS website. Other places you can advertise for free include:

- [Charity Jobs](#)
- [Small charities coalition](#)
- [NCVO](#) (You would need to join, which is free if your annual income is less than £30,000)
- [Gumtree](#) offer 2 free adverts per year – a great place to advertise to young people
- [Facebook](#) – ask your friends to share and you will be amazed how far a message can go

Advertising in the real world

To reach those not on the internet, or those who haven't thought about volunteering, consider:

- Your local [volunteer centre](#). A great place to start, full of people wanting to give up their time to help others.
- Places with a link to deafness eg. GPs, audiology clinics, cochlear implant clinics etc.
- Public places eg. libraries, schools, Citizens Advice Bureaux, leisure centres, post offices, banks, supermarkets, job centres.
- If you are trying to target a particular audience, think about where those people might be found eg. places of worship, community centres, after school clubs, cinemas.

Some of these places might charge for advertising, but it may not be very much. If it is more than you are willing to pay, ask if they consider charity discounts.

Step five: choosing your new committee members

Bear in mind that it's okay to say 'no'. Just because they're offering their time for free doesn't mean that you have to accept it, if they don't have the skills or experience you need.

Think back to the gaps you identified in step one. If a number of candidates could fulfil these, you might want to meet applicants to understand their motivations for volunteering. Or you might want to invite them to an event, and see how they interact with the children, young people and parents.

Step six: inducting your new committee members

'Induction' sounds very formal, but it doesn't have to be. It's just a way to ensure that new members have the information they need to get started. An induction pack could include:

- Your constitution and affiliation agreement
- Any policies and procedures they will need to abide by
- A copy of the NDCS *Good Committee Guide*
- Information about your group's activities and finances
- Contact details for the committee members

Committee members may also need some support around deaf awareness and understanding some of the issues faced by deaf children, young people and their families. Be ready to answer their questions, offer your advice and give them time to get to grips with things. Remember the secret to an effective, happy and sustainable group is a strong committee that works together.