Why do you want volunteers?

Careful planning is the key to building a good foundation for involving volunteers.

Some questions to consider:

• Are there tasks you would like carrying out that staff members currently don’t have time to do, that would enhance your service?

• By involving volunteers could you extend the area or times your service operates?

• Do you have a dream project which you can’t commit to at present?

• Do you actually need volunteers?

• Will volunteers compliment or add value to the services you provide?

• Are all your Trustees, staff and service users included in the decision to use volunteers?

Allay any fears that volunteer involvement will lead to a changes in your service by emphasising the benefits that using volunteers will bring:

• Greater flexibility.

• New ideas or skills.

• Increased diversity.

• Greater participation in the community.

Other things to consider:

• Volunteers should never replace paid workers, nor should they be thought of as a second choice or regarded as temporary until funding improves and you can recruit paid staff.

• Although volunteers give their time for ‘free’ they should not be used as an opportunity to give them jobs that no-one else wants to do.

• Salaried staff should be reassured that volunteers will not threaten their jobs.

• Have you someone with the time/ expertise to recruit and manage volunteers?