4. Recruiting people from black and minority ethnic communities
A guide for managers
Introduction

Britain is a multicultural society made up of people from many different ethnic backgrounds. It is essential that WRVS, as one of the largest voluntary organisations in the UK, embraces diversity in all its forms.

It’s important to remember that cultural differences will exist between ethnic groups including language, religion, specific traditions and dress code as well as dietary requirements and we may need to make some adjustments to accommodate these.

Why are we targeting people from black and minority ethnic communities?

We want to increase our volunteers generally but also make sure that our volunteers reflect the communities in which our services are based.

People from diverse backgrounds will bring different skills, experience and knowledge to WRVS.

Many WRVS services are situated in the heart of black and minority ethnic communities therefore it makes sense to recruit people from the local community. Also we know that volunteers prefer to be based nearer to home

How do people from black and minority ethnic communities benefit from volunteering?

• Volunteers want to make a positive contribution to the communities that they live in
• Volunteering provides an important route to better integration in and strengthening of communities, for example volunteering can provide the opportunity for people to improve their English. It is also a good opportunity to help tackle social exclusion and to engage with traditionally hard to reach groups
• A better community spirit is developed which benefits our service users, volunteers and WRVS
• Volunteering can improve career prospects. Many employers look for evidence of voluntary service on CVs
• Within black and minority ethnic communities we can offer volunteering opportunities to all age groups
Getting started

Get to know the ethnic mix of the community in which your service is based. If you already have volunteers from different ethnic groups, enlist their help in developing greater awareness about the fantastic work that WRVS does.

Use publicity materials to target places that a wide range of people will use, for example doctors surgeries and dentists as well as leisure centres.

Here are some more examples of places to spread the word about volunteering with WRVS:

- Organisations specifically designed to serve a particular community
- Local shops serving the needs of a diverse community for example clothing or food shops
- Local specialist restaurants
- Places of worship like mosques and temples
- Local schools
- Hold an open day within the local community to highlight the many opportunities available
- Make links with local ethnic media for example The Asian Leader or The Punjabi News
- Form links with organisations and associations that exist to serve specific groups such as the Somalia Union, Muslim Councils and Hindu Association. Also publications like The Asian Business Directory
- Find out if there are local radio stations broadcasting to particular ethnic groups
- Get in touch with local councillors from black and minority ethnic communities to see if they will help promote volunteering
- Establish links with representatives of black and minority ethnic communities at the National Union of Students

What can volunteers from black and minority ethnic communities do?

These volunteers will be able to undertake the same kind of volunteering opportunities as anyone else.

However there may be specific roles that would help you to develop your service further. For example, if they speak languages in addition to English this might be helpful in translation for some service users.

They might also like to get involved in recruiting other volunteers from black and minority ethnic communities.
How do I maintain and develop recruitment?

Make sure that you continue to develop links with local organisations and as more new volunteers from these groups join us ask them to get involved in the recruitment of other people from their communities.

Don’t be afraid to ask questions if you are uncertain about particular ethnic traditions. Explain that you want to offer whatever support people may need to volunteer whilst respecting their cultural differences. Be flexible in your approach so that volunteers feel comfortable and supported.
Sample letter to, for example, BME organisations/associations, places of worship, schools, colleges and universities in areas where black and minority ethnic groups live

Dear (insert name)

WRVS is a national charity with over 70 years’ experience and 45,000 amazing volunteers of all ages, who support older people to stay independent at home and active in their local community. Our extraordinary history of service to local communities is matched only by our passion to make Britain a great place to grow old.

We are trying to raise our profile in the local community and attract volunteers from black and minority ethnic communities. We would be most grateful if the posters enclosed could be displayed on notice boards/student notice boards (select) or if you could make mention of who we are and what we do in any communications that you may have for your members/students (select).

At WRVS we have a range of volunteering opportunities for people to make a positive contribution to their local community, make new friends, learn new skills and put existing skills to good use.

(insert if school/college) We offer students work experience and an opportunity to boost their CV.

Opportunities are available at (insert name of service), training is provided and out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed. Just a few hours each week or fortnight can make a real difference.

If you would like to find out more about the work of WRVS please feel free to contact me (insert name and contact details).

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

The text of this letter is in word format on the CD enclosed for you to customise and print out on a letterhead.
Dear Sir

Older people’s charity WRVS has launched a recruitment drive to encourage people from black and minority ethnic communities to come forward and join them in serving the needs of their local communities by volunteering.

We live in a multi-cultural society and it is essential that we highlight this richness and diversity through our volunteering base. It is through people’s knowledge, experience and background that WRVS can provide services that reflect society and help to integrate communities.

Volunteering gives you the opportunity to make new friends, gain new skills and give something back to your community. It’s amazing the difference a couple of hours of your time each week can make to someone’s life.

Any of your readers, male or female who are over the age of 14 are invited to volunteer with WRVS and will be given training and expenses.

Interested readers should ring our recruitment line on 0846 601 4670 or visit wrvs.org.uk

Yours sincerely
Sample news release to local media to attract new volunteers from black and minority ethnic communities

NEWS RELEASE

Volunteering for All

Older people's charity WRVS are working towards achieving a more diverse volunteer base.

(insert local service manager's name) said

“Our volunteering opportunities are open to all members of the community. If you have spare time, are on the look out to learn new skills or put existing skills to good use come along and join us. Volunteering is a great way to make new friends”.

(insert name of volunteer from a BME background) said

(insert quote about their experience as a WRVS volunteer)

Just a couple of hours every week or fortnight can make a big difference.

There's a wide range of volunteering opportunities on offer that can help you to add new skills and experiences to your CV. WRVS provides you with training and will reimburse out of pocket expenses.

In (insert name of town or service name) WRVS has volunteering opportunities available for (list opportunities and location). For more information come along to ...........(insert details of recruitment event/open day).

Alternatively you can call our recruitment line on 0845 601 4670 or visit wrvs.org.uk

Notes for editors

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For more information (insert contact details)