

Other things to consider:

- Don't be put off by tricky stuff like insurance or safeguarding policies. Often all it takes is a small tweak of your current policy to include under 16s. Your existing insurance policy should not be a barrier to involving young people. If the minimum age is not as low as you would like, then ask them to lower it, quite possibly at no or little cost.
- Remember that written parental/guardian permission is required for young volunteers aged under 16yrs
- It's also worth contacting Adam Bond (Safeguarding Adviser) Dan Jones (Youth and Children's Adviser) for further advice on specific policy elements.
- An interactive training session is also available from Daniel Jones to help young leaders discuss and understand their role and responsibilities. Contact Dan on 0117 906 0100 or daniel.jones@bristoldiocese.org

Volunteering Responsibilities Statement:

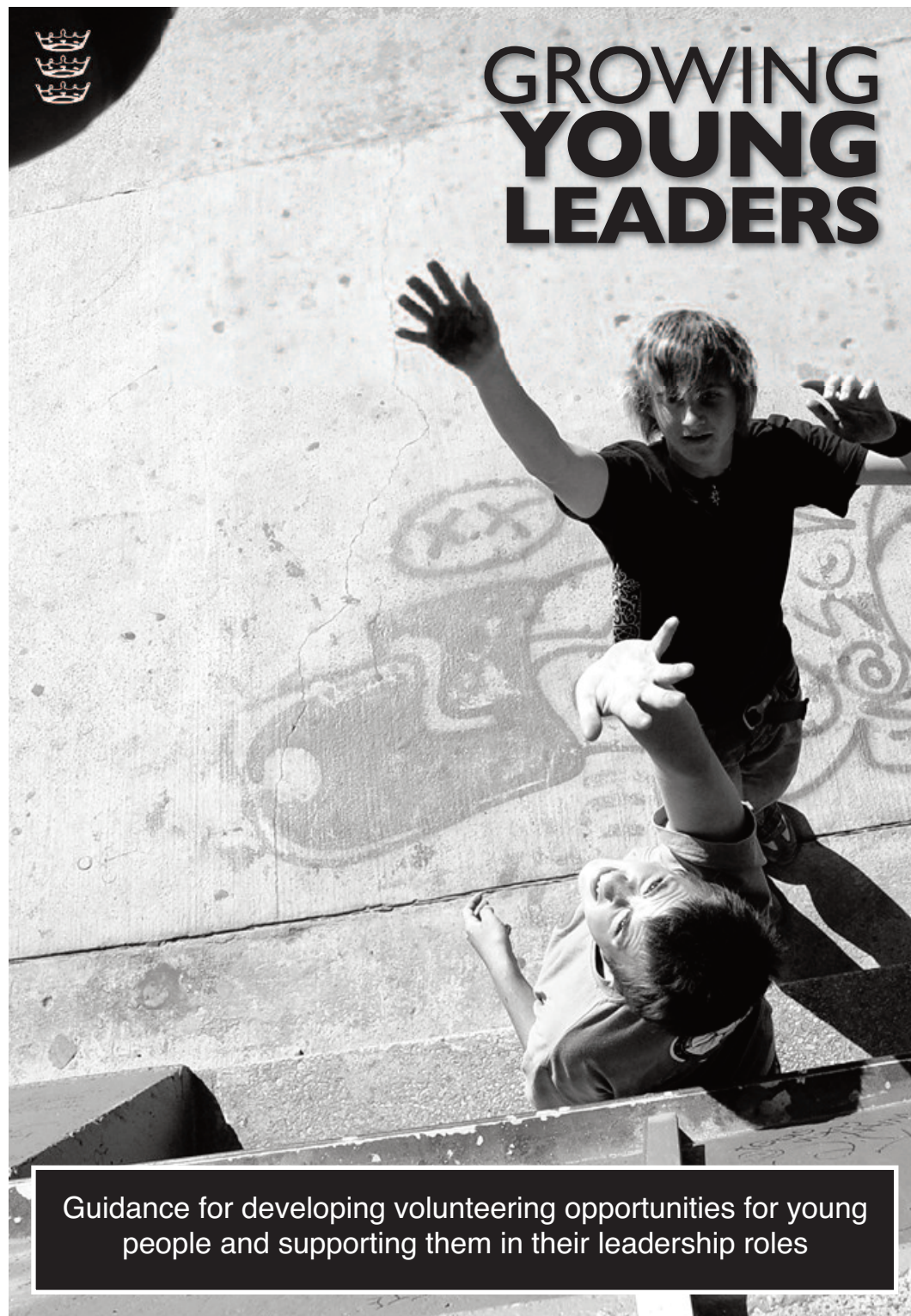
A statement of volunteering responsibility could be written and signed by both you and the young volunteer, this could include lines such as:

The Leadership Team will:

- Provide you with support, supervision and a main point of contact for your volunteering.
- Provide you with training opportunities relevant to your role.
- Provide you with all the necessary equipment and resources to enable you to fulfil your role effectively.
- Listen to you and not pressurise you into volunteering to do anything that you don't actually want to do.
- Acknowledge, honour and respect the commitment you make by giving your time and skills to support the mission and ministry of this church.

The Leadership Team will expect you to:

- Let us know in advance if you cannot make a session or event that you were due to be involved with so that we can arrange cover.
- Endeavour to be on time for the session or event you are involved with.
- Have read and understood the churches Safeguarding Policy and adhere to it.
- Have read the 'Young Leaders Handbook' for practical help and advice.
- Contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer if you have concerns over the running of a group or activity or safety of a child or young person.
- Attend relevant training events that we organise wherever possible; especially any Safeguarding training events.
- Always act in an appropriate way which reflects your position of responsibility when working with children or young people.



Introduction to young volunteering:

Young people have a vast amount they can offer the life of our churches and yet a lot of churches miss out on this vital opportunity, citing a number of common myths surrounding young volunteering. Age should not exclude young people from volunteering in a multitude of roles within their churches, bringing their skills, passions and fresh outlook to the role. As a Diocese we are committed to the priorities of Growing Leaders and Engaging Younger Generations, what better way to demonstrate our commitment to these priorities than by including young people as volunteers in the life of our churches.

Young people can bring a tremendous amount of energy, enthusiasm and commitment to a volunteering role. Not only does volunteering give them a recognised role with responsibilities that draws them into the life of the church, volunteering also provides young people with fantastic ways to build confidence, develop life skills and gifts, experiences that challenge and help their faith grow, and opportunities that can increase job prospects, vocation or access to further education.

How do we do it?

So what do young people want from volunteering opportunities? Responsibilities, recognition, new skills and opportunities to serve, are often the most common responses. Believe it or not, young people are passionate about Church and they would like more involvement in what goes on. Unfortunately, all too often they are looked over and their potential contributions are not taken seriously enough, they are viewed as second rate volunteers or just 'helpers'.

Is your church missing out on the advantages of having young people involved who can bring their own fresh and youthful dynamic to the ministry, mission and outreach in your church?

Young volunteering is not about creating new 'special' roles for young people, but to seek out ways to involve young people within existing structures and to adapt in order to accommodate young people wherever appropriate?

Investing in young volunteers does take time, patience and perseverance, but the results of all that effort will become evident as they begin to influence their peers, other volunteers and impact the wider church too!

The key to successful young volunteering is matching interests to roles, just as you would when working with a volunteer of any age. There may already roles where a young person's skillset will naturally be beneficial; anything technological for example! Use the young person's interests as a spring board. If the young person has come to you, that's even better.

Find out what attracted them in the first place - that's what makes volunteering successful or not – if the young person is actually interested and volunteer because they want to, not because they have to, maintaining their interest and motivation becomes so much easier.

General Checklist for young volunteers



When thinking about opportunities for young volunteers, it is important to think about what support structures and policies you will need to support you and your volunteers. The following checklist will guide you through some of the things you will need to think about:

Before you start think about:

- Make volunteering opportunities attractive and appealing to young people. Variety and a fun element are generally popular requirements.
- Identify the voluntary roles and create job descriptions that clearly define the responsibilities, expectations and commitment that is required.
- Flexibility is an important factor to reflect the diverse range of demands and influences on a young person's life. Remember to factor in commitment and time such as offering short term roles for young people.

Recruitment:

- Make sure the information you provide gives details about the benefits of volunteering such as building confidence, developing new skills and being part of the leadership team.
- Seek opportunities to directly ask young people to get involved – many young people feel they have never been asked to volunteer. Encourage young volunteers to invite their friends to get involved.
- Recruit any young volunteer as you would if they were an adult. This includes an informal interview, character references and DBS check (if aged 16yrs+). This will be good experience as and when they seek employment in the future.
- Ensure that young people feel valued and respected by others they may be volunteering with or for.
- Provide a friendly and relaxed environment for young volunteers with appropriate support from an identified adult leader as when they need it.
- Organise an induction session so that young volunteers have the opportunity to learn about their role, responsibilities and any expectations (a downloadable session can be found on the diocesan website).
- Provide or signpost young volunteers to relevant training so that they, and adult leaders, can develop together and grow in their roles.
- Give praise when praise is due. Regularly celebrate the involvement of young volunteers, thank them and acknowledge their contribution
- Follow good practice guidelines in the management of volunteers providing support and supervision however ensure that the systems are as user friendly as possible.
- Commission all volunteers as part of a special service to affirm, promote and pray for them in their roles. Appropriate liturgy is available from the diocesan Youth and Children's Adviser.