

Welcome to the Volunteer Led Learning Toolkit

This guide is for schools who wish to utilise volunteer tutors from their local community to support the development and life chances of its pupils.

The production of this toolkit was supported by Nesta and the Cabinet Office as part of their People Powered Schools programme which aims to mobilise more volunteer tutors to support students in schools to improve their educational attainment.



Introduction to the toolkit

This guide is for schools who wish to mobilise volunteers from their local community to support the development and life chances of their pupils.

Phase 1: Planning for Delivery

Phase 2: Recruitment and Training

Phase 3: Induction and Delivery

Phase 4: Evaluation

Volunteer Led Learning (VLL)

The value of well deployed volunteers in schools is now widely recognised. Volunteers are an additional resource which can help to raise aspiration, improve attainment and support personal development.

Henderson and Mapp (2002) report evidence that volunteers can be significant resources in helping create a supportive and welcoming environment at schools and facilitating students' behaviour and performance.

As positive role models and student motivators, volunteers are viewed as contributing to better school attendance, improved grades and test scores, matriculation, less misbehaviour, better social skills, staying in school, graduating and going on to college. Available evidence suggests that when adult volunteers are present, students see that adults take school and education seriously and respect learning. This promotes positive attitudes toward school.

UFA is delighted to present this Volunteer Led Learning toolkit. As a national charity we have a 20 year history of bringing home, school and community together to ensure there is a joint approach to addressing young people's needs, enabling them to maximise their potential.

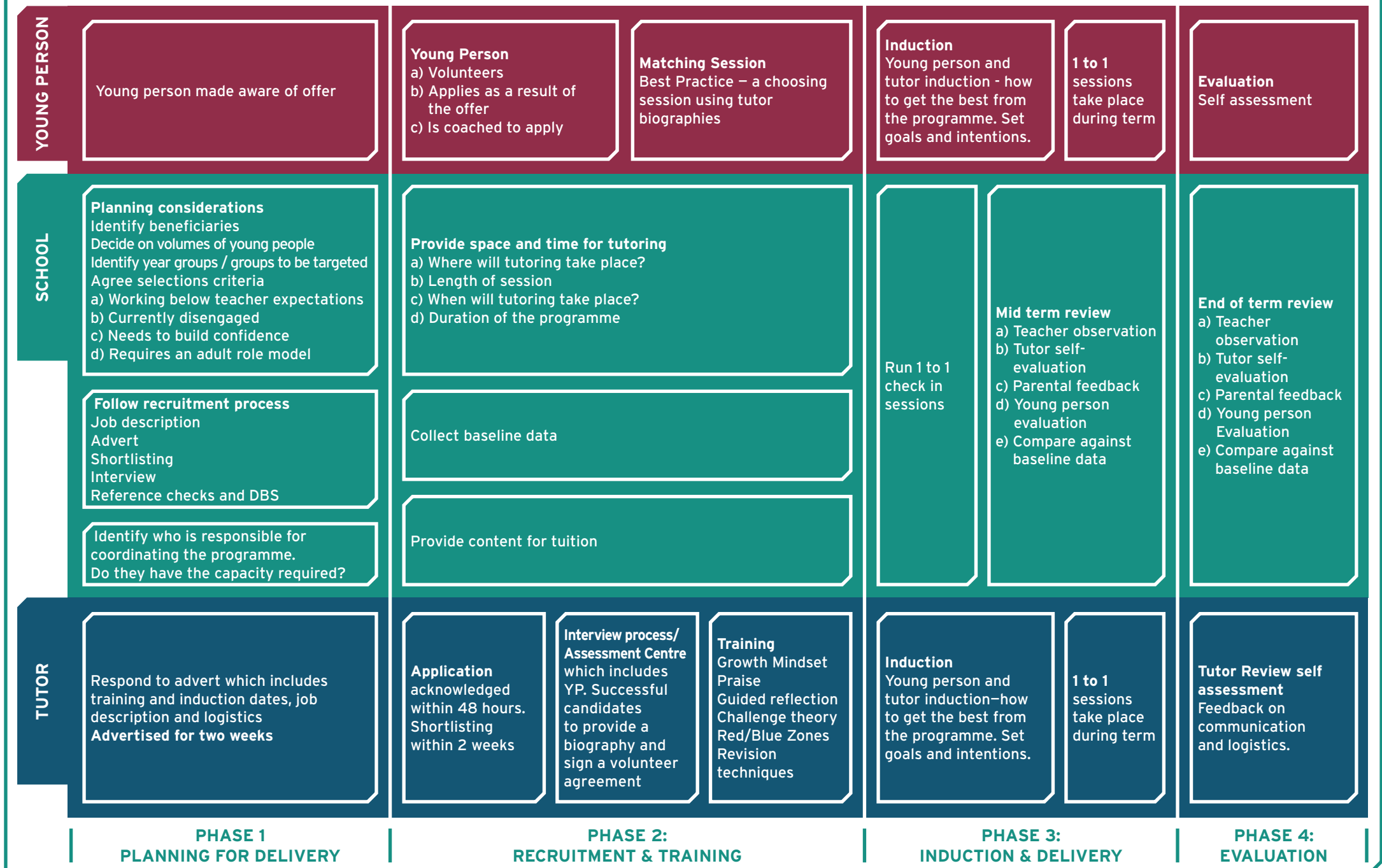
The following toolkit is framed around 4 stages which are outlined in the process map and provides a range of resources to support the development of 'Learning to Learn' volunteers. These tools could help your school to effectively mobilise volunteers from within your community to support the development and life chances of your pupils. UFA are a learning organisation and would be delighted to receive your feedback on the tools within this document.

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We would also like to thank Whole Education for their support with developing this toolkit.

The toolkit is just one part of the programme, Nesta and the Cabinet Office have also backed a range of social innovations to grow, significantly increasing the number of volunteer tutors giving their time and energy to well evidenced tutoring interventions that they know make a difference to student's grades. For more information see www.nesta.org.uk

Volunteer Led Learning Process Map



Phase 1 - Planning for Delivery

In this section, we will outline the key things that you will need to consider during the planning process. We also provide you with some tools that you should find useful.

What happens at this stage?

Putting in place a volunteer-led tutoring programme requires proper planning. We advise that you begin this at least one school term before you want to begin delivery of tutoring to students.

Linking your VLL programme to your school's strategic vision, development plans and specific targets will help secure whole school support for the programme. Showing how the programme can help achieve school priorities will help young people, staff, parents and volunteers see the value of VLL and want to be involved.

It is good practice to brief all school staff and governors as this will help ensure whole school 'buy in' to the VLL programme. It is particularly important to make sure administration staff are aware of the programme as they are likely to be an initial point of contact for volunteers.

YOUNG PERSON

Young person made aware of offer

SCHOOL

Planning considerations

Identify beneficiaries
Decide on volumes of young people
Identify year groups / groups to be targeted

Agree selections criteria

a) Working below teacher expectations
b) Currently disengaged
c) Needs to build confidence
d) Requires an adult role model

Follow recruitment process

Job description
Advert
Shortlisting
Interview
Reference checks and DBS

Identify who is responsible for coordinating the programme.
Do they have the capacity required?

TUTOR

Respond to advert which includes training and induction dates, job description and logistics
Advertised for two weeks

During your planning, you will need to think about:

- The selection criteria for pupils participating in the tutoring
- How the sessions will be delivered
- What kind of volunteers you want and how you will recruit them
- Who in the school will coordinate the programme and how they will make it work
- How you will interview, train and support volunteers once they are in post

The selection criteria

One of the first things you need to do is to identify beneficiaries, how many young people do you want to be involved in the programme?

You will need to decide this before recruitment and it should depend on how many young people the programme can support. We would suggest you start with a small group of around 15 or smaller - once you are comfortable that the systems you have put in place are working you can increase the size of the group.

Which year group will you concentrate on? Are you looking to focus on particular target groups, for example those:

- Working below teacher expectation
- Disengaged from learning
- Who need to build their confidence
- Who would benefit from an adult role model

Once you have made this decision you will be much better able to tailor the rest of the programme to the needs of your target group.

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How the sessions will be delivered

You also need to think about when tutoring sessions will take place. Will it be during school time, evenings or weekends?

Consider when young people and volunteers are most likely to engage, you are less likely to have 'drop out' if you consider this now. How long will tutoring sessions last?

Think about how sessions fit within how your school currently operates, if you open for sessions outside of school hours this may impact on site supervision and could incur costs.

Coordinating the programme

Making sure your programme is effectively and efficiently coordinated by someone within the school will be essential to success. It is not possible to be prescriptive about how much time it will take - it very much depends on the size of the programme you are planning to deliver - but it will require a staff member who has the capacity and the skills to manage volunteers.

The primary reason it requires some dedicated staff time is that volunteers need proper coordination. This will be a significant role for volunteers, they will need to know who to contact for advice and support, as well as be supplied with the appropriate materials.

The approach to materials will be a crucial component of the success or failure of the tutoring relationship. We believe that the most effective method will be for the materials used in tutoring sessions to be aligned to those used in the classroom. This will require some coordination and ongoing liaison with teachers so that appropriate materials can be regularly sourced.

It is advisable that semi-regular volunteer meetings are held, these can be used to monitor progress and provide additional support. Some tutors may need more support than others, whilst those that are more capable could take on additional tutees or a coaching role for other volunteers.

Setting up a volunteer led learning programme does require this up-front investment of resources, but once established this will inevitably reduce.

Starting your volunteer recruitment

Once you have considered the volumes of young people to be involved in your VLL programme and identified your capacity to coordinate you can focus on volunteer recruitment. You should include the volunteer job description, timeline for recruitment, induction and training dates in correspondence to applicants. This will allow potential volunteers to fully understand the recruitment and training process as well as the commitment required to part of the programme.

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Think about where you will advertise the volunteering opportunity, you could use:

- Your school website/newsletter
- Local volunteer bureaus
- Local university
- Parents
- Free online recruitment sites
- Local employers as some may have Corporate Social Responsibility programmes
- Businesses can also use volunteering opportunities as a recruitment or retention tool
- do-it.org.uk

Volunteer posts should be advertised for at least two weeks, ideally shortlisting should take place within one week with interview following no longer two weeks after this. It would be sensible to identify times when your coordinator will be available to answer any questions the advert generates. You could then generate a range of frequently asked questions for future use. Your interviews can be formal, informal or even as a group. It is important not only to explore if applicants have the necessary skills to perform the role, but also about how comfortably they will fit into your school. Good practice would see young people included as part of the interview process. Once you have identified successful candidates it is vital to begin the DBS process as quickly as possible, as all checks need to have been completed before tuition can begin. DBS checks can take up to six weeks.

Key steps during this stage:

- Promote your Volunteer Led Learning programme ✓
- Recruit young people ✓
- Match tutors and tutees ✓
- Train volunteer tutors ✓

YOUR TOOLS



Process Map



Pre delivery planning questions



Volunteer coordinator job description



Making the most of your VLL programme



Volunteer recruitment process



Volunteer Job advert

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Phase 2 - Enrolling pupils and volunteer training

In this section we will focus on recruitment of young people and the training of volunteers.

Enrolling pupils on the programme

Young people will primarily become involved with your tutoring programme in three ways. They can apply to be part of the programme having been made aware of the offer, or they could be coached to apply or could be referred by a member of staff.

In this section we have provided a sample letter that could be sent to parents/carers to make them aware that their child is going to be part of the VLL programme.

You need to think about what you can do to make staff aware of the purpose of the programme. School governors should also be informed about the programme and there may be a link governor who could support you - inviting them to the training session will help them to see this aspect of the programme in action.

Consider running a short staff inset where you can set out your aims and intentions. You could also create web content, tweets, display boards etc. to raise awareness and profile.

How you promote your tutoring programme within your school will impact on how many young people are willing to take up the offer. Traditional routes such as assemblies, announcements on display boards all work well. You might consider using a teaser campaign a few weeks before you start your recruitment with posters or messages appearing around the school to spark young people's interest.

Using young people to promote your programme can be very effective, they can create posters and other materials - their creativity is a great resource particularly as it speaks well to their peers. You could also use your student council to help promote the programme.

YOUNG PERSON

Young Person

- a) Volunteers
- b) Applies as a result of the offer
- c) Is coached to apply

Matching Session

Best Practice – a choosing session using tutor biographies

SCHOOL

Provide space and time for tutoring

- a) Where will tutoring take place?
- b) Length of session
- c) When will tutoring take place?
- d) Duration of the programme

Collect baseline data

Provide content for tuition

TUTOR

Application acknowledged within 48 hours.
Shortlisting within 2 weeks

Interview process/ Assessment Centre which includes YP. Successful candidates to provide a biography and sign a volunteer agreement

Training
Growth Mindset
Praise
Guided reflection
Challenge theory
Red/Blue Zones
Revision techniques

Once your programme has been running for a while you can use those young people who have worked with volunteers to share the positive impact of involvement in the Volunteer Led Learning programme

Once you have identified the cohort of young people you will be working you should begin to collect baseline data. This could be attainment, attendance or behaviour data as well as the views of staff and parents on levels of confidence. Anecdotal and 'softer' data is also extremely powerful.

Young people could be encouraged to blog about their experience or keep a learning journal. The data you choose to collect will be dependent on the focus and aims of your programme. Communication with school departments who may hold some of the data you need should be clear and regular.

Training Volunteers

Providing your volunteers with high quality training is vital to ensure they are well equipped to undertake the role of a volunteer tutor. We recommend volunteers receive at least one day of training.

The best learning environments for this training are flexible, with enough space for participants to sit in groups at tables but also to sit as a whole group. A large classroom or hall is ideal but not somewhere you will have to move out for lunchtimes. No matter what size of group to be trained another pair of hands is always useful, they can help take pictures or generally help with facilitation.

The Volunteer Led learning training aims to:

- Establish a quality standard for the delivery of a volunteer led tutor programme
- Clarify the role of volunteer tutor
- Allay any fears and deal with queries

As a result of attending the training volunteers should:

- Be comfortable with the programme and their role within it
- Feel a sense of commitment to the delivery of a high quality programme
- Feel a sense of team with their fellow tutors
- Understand the school setting in which they will be working

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Volunteer Led Learning training does not take participants through a set of academic materials, but rather works with them and leads them through a range of activities that model processes and approaches to learning that underpin the Volunteer Led Learning programme. These will support volunteers to provide a high quality learning experience for the young people they work with.

The training should be seen as a springboard which gives a grounding to help volunteers have the confidence to be volunteer tutors. However, as they undertake their role they will need time and space to reflect on their role, their experiences and learning.

How to Deliver the Training

Preparing for training

To run effective adult training sessions the training must fit the needs of the group. Therefore as a trainer of volunteers who potentially come from a variety of backgrounds knowing your audience is vital. Find out as much as you can about your volunteers beforehand. It is then up to you to set the tone. Jensen suggests that once a group reaches more than 10-15 it takes on its own energy and culture. As the trainer you have the responsibility to mould this group energy in the early stages to establish a positive group culture. 'Before the group has cemented its own culture, you can influence it.' (Jensen 1998).

Creating Rapport with the group

In order to manage the energy levels of the group you are training, you first need to attend to the emotional needs of the group and begin to establish a rapport with them.

- People need to feel valued before they learn effectively
- They are individuals and have individual needs (even though you are dealing with the whole group)
- Meaning is more important to people than information - i.e. they need to know you care about them before they care about what you are saying
- People process information based on how it fits in with their mindset and how it serves their personal needs
- People like to know what to expect



Ways to establish rapport

- Smile and show your audience you like them before you even start
- Be interested in the group
- Establish personal relationships with key people or group leaders as soon as possible
- Greet them by name when you can
- Be sincere and communicate care
- Remember the most powerful messages you will receive and give will be non-verbal. Notice posture, gestures, eye contact etc.

Creating a positive learning environment

It is useful to arrange the room so that you can be flexible with the available space. A horseshoe arrangement maximises everybody's involvement and allows space for more physical activities without major shifts in furniture.

Room Layout

Do you need tables? They are useful to write and put books on but they can also interfere with physical activities which may be important for the group dynamic or for allowing kinaesthetic learners to become involved. Files can be put on the floor and knees can be used for writing notes. This allows you to use a circular or horseshoe formation. Check people are comfortable with this arrangement.

Wall space can be used to introduce the content "unconsciously" without always explicitly referring to it. This helps to accelerate the learning process. The resources on the walls can be built into the learning process so that the unconscious becomes conscious.

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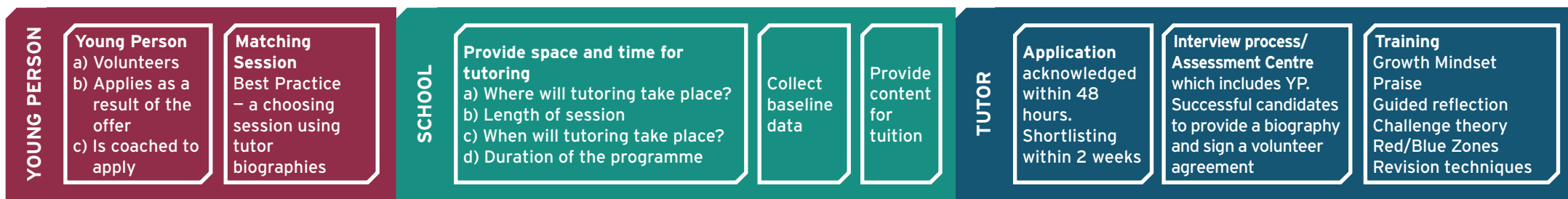
In the room, on the day

- First things first - see to people's basic needs, safety, comfort etc
- Use name badges/stickers for larger groups
- Start on time and end on time. If you model good timekeeping your group will stick to it
- Set up channels of communication within the training session so that they can lodge questions, thoughts, ideas etc. as they have them without disrupting the flow of the session too much eg Post Its, a 'Questions' wall to park and collect their questions. You can collect these questions and create a FAQ resource for future use
- The climate you create is key - the activities we've included ensure that there is a balance of active processes, including icebreakers and energisers, as well as serious topics for discussion and reflection
- One of the important things you need to do is manage the energy of the group. The use of icebreakers and energisers help to do this
- Make sure people understand what they are part of, describe the context/big picture of what you're doing
- Be reassuring. You are asking the participants to stretch themselves and do new, potentially daunting things. Make sure they know they have your support and encourage them to begin from where they are
- Set high expectations for their "professionalism"; that they will need to supplement the training with their personal preparation
- Make sure a register is taken so you know exactly who has attended

Activities

We have provided activity outlines for your training session. These templates identify:

- The purpose of the activity
- How to deliver the activity
- Resources requires
- The amount of time required



Matching Tutors to Pupils

Matching the skills and talents of your volunteers to the needs of your students is a vital part of your programme. We believe that putting young people at the heart of this process is important and have therefore developed activities to support this. You could use volunteer biographies to share their skills and experience with young people as part of the matching process. You will need to manage expectations, not everyone will necessarily get their first choice tutor, however used properly this process can highlight and develop negotiation and communication skills.

Key steps during this stage:

- Promote your Volunteer Led Learning ✓
- Recruit young people ✓
- Match tutors and tutees ✓
- Train volunteer tutors ✓
- Organise logistics of tutoring (when, where and for how long) ✓

YOUR TOOLS

-  Volunteer application form
-  Interview questions
-  Volunteer contract
-  Student information letter
-  Parental permission letter
-  Volunteer invitation to training
-  Training outline
-  Training slides
-  Activity templates
-  Mindset activity

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Phase 3 - Induction and Delivery

This section will look at volunteer and young person induction, delivery and the mid-term review process.

Preparing your volunteers for delivery will have begun with training, however it is important they also have an induction session. Ideally this will be done for young people and volunteers at the same time. This means that everyone gets the same message, and so avoids confusion, manages expectations and generally reassures everyone involved.

Volunteers need to know:

- Your expectations
- Tuition venues
- School timings, rituals and protocols
- Coordinator details, name, contact number and email, who to contact in their absence
- Child protection and safeguarding polices and who is your Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Dress code
- How tutors are addressed - forenames or Mr/Mrs/Ms

YOUNG PERSON

Induction

Young person and tutor induction—how to get the best from the programme. Set goals and intentions.

1 to 1 sessions take place during term

SCHOOL

Run 1 to 1 check in sessions

Mid term review

- a) Teacher observation
- b) Tutor self- evaluation
- c) Parental feedback
- d) Young person evaluation
- e) Compare against baseline data

TUTOR

Induction

Young person and tutor induction—how to get the best from the programme. Set goals and intentions.

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At the mid-term point you should review how things are going, this review should include:

- Feedback from teachers - have they noted any changes in attitude to learning or academic progress?
- Parental feedback - have they noticed any changes in behaviour or engagement with school/learning?
- Volunteer tutor self-evaluation and reflection - what has gone well? Are there any areas they need further support with?
- Young person evaluations- how they feel at the mid-term part of the process?

Once you have collected this information it should be compared against baseline data. This would be a good time to complete an interim report for your Headteacher, governors and update staff on progress.

At this point you may be in a position to recognise trends looking particularly at areas for development this will allow you to make amendments to the programme for next half term. For example timings may not be quite right, relationships are not developing as you had anticipated or there are barriers to engagement.

Key steps during this stage:

- Induction ✓
- Tutoring begins ✓
- Mid-term review ✓

YOUR TOOLS



Volunteer briefing



Volunteer biography



Find someone who

YOUNG PERSON

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Young person and tutor induction—how to get the best from the programme. Set goals and intentions.

1 to 1 sessions take place during term

Phase 4 - Evaluation

As your first cohort of volunteer tutors and tutees enters the final stages of your programme you should be completing evaluations, reflecting on your practice and sharing successes.

Your end of year review should mirror your mid-term review, to ensure you capture comparable data. Seeking feedback from staff, parents, volunteers and students will provide you with a range of data. It is important to check out if it is reasonable to expect your volunteer activity to deliver the outcomes you have identified.

We would recommend one to one check in sessions with all volunteers. Use their feedback to help shape your programme for the coming year. It would be particularly useful to get feedback on your communication systems and logistics of the programme from the perspective of volunteers. What involvement in the Volunteer Led Learning has felt like for them? Some volunteers may have been involved in the programme as preparation for taking up a related role. You may be asked to provide references.

YOUNG PERSON

Evaluation Self assessment

SCHOOL

End of term review
a) Teacher observation
b) Tutor self- evaluation
c) Parental feedback
d) Young person evaluation
e) Compare against baseline data

TUTOR

Tutor Review self assessment
Feedback on communication and logistics.

Evaluating the impact that volunteering makes helps to:

- Demonstrate that student outcomes have improved as a result of their involvement in the Volunteer Led Learning programme
- Provide evidence for Ofsted and other inspectors
- Ensure your programme is valued by key stakeholders i.e. students, staff and governors so that it can be maintained over time
- Understand what has worked well or what changes you may need to make
- Provide feedback to volunteers on the difference their contribution has made
- Provide evidence for potential funders on the added value that volunteers bring

Celebrate your success! Use normal channels within school such as staff briefings, assemblies, newsletters and webpages. You should also consider harnessing the power of digital media and shouting about the good news with local media channels and across your school's networks.

You can acknowledge the contribution volunteer tutors have made to your school by presenting them with certificates, inviting them to school events or sending a letter of thanks.

Key steps during this stage:

- Evaluate the programme ✓
- Think about changes to next year's programme in light of feedback ✓
- Celebrate success ✓

YOUR TOOLS



Tracking proforma



Volunteer self-evaluation

YOUNG PERSON

Evaluation Self assessment

SCHOOL

End of term review

- Teacher observation
- Tutor self- evaluation
- Parental feedback
- Young person evaluation
- Compare against baseline data

TUTOR

Tutor Review self assessment
Feedback on communication and logistics.

To discuss any aspect of the toolkit or for support on training your volunteers please contact the National Development Team at UFA on 0121 766 8077.

UFA is an educational charity which creates and delivers innovative programmes to develop leadership and learning opportunities in education and the wider community.

