

RDA

A GUIDE TO RECRUITING RETIREES



WHY RETIREES?

Targeting retirees for your volunteer recruitment is important and for many years retirees have been at the heart of the workforce of many organisations involving volunteers, including RDA.

Many people retire early and even those who work to retirement age are often still very fit and active and can be a great asset to your group.

Retired people generally have a little more time on their hands and are often looking for something to do with that time, particularly something they consider worthwhile.

Volunteering also has distinct benefits for retirees. It can help with the transition from a busy working life to retirement, by providing structure and a network of friendly likeminded people. It can also have distinct health benefits in aiding people to keep physically and mentally active. Everyone has something to gain through volunteering.

As we seek to continue to provide the best possible experience for riders and drivers at RDA it is increasingly important to make the most of the contribution of retirees who have a lifetime of precious skills and experiences which could benefit riders and drivers.



LOOKING IN THE RIGHT PLACES

It may sound obvious but if your group is looking to recruit retirees it's important make sure you focus your recruitment efforts in the places where retired people might go.

Leisure Centres & Clubs

Many leisure centres and clubs have sessions specifically aimed at older people and are usually happy to take promotional materials to display or hand out.

Supermarkets

If you are putting on a recruitment event, timing is important. Having a stand in the day at a local supermarket might be a great way to reach retirees when older people often do their shopping. Many supermarkets also have a community noticeboard which is a great place for displaying eye catching posters.

Older People's Organisations

Most areas have some kind of local provision for older people, usually in the form of clubs and societies. It may be worth contacting your local authority or local library, church or community centre to find out what is on offer for older people. Some local groups may like to have a speaker at their meetings this is great opportunity to meet people and tell them all about RDA.

Local Companies and Public Sector Organisations

Large employers often run pre-retirement sessions for employees nearing retirement age. By contacting local HR departments you may be able to join in with any promotional events they may have organised or place publicity materials in the staff areas. There may even be networks or newsletters for recently retired employees. social media tools such as Facebook can also be particularly effective in this area.

Online Recruitment

Increasingly, retirees are looking for volunteer opportunities online. Make sure your opportunities are advertised on volunteer recruitment websites such as www.joininuk.org or www.do-it.org both of these websites are designed to match those looking to volunteer with opportunities in their area.



USING SKILLS & TALENTS

Many people heading for retirement have enjoyed successful challenging careers and are looking for ways to apply those skills and experience in ways that directly benefit their local communities.

Make Time for a Chat

It's important that all new volunteers feel welcomed so it is a good idea to start by spending some time getting to know what they are interested in. Find out what attracted them to the role in the first place and what they want to get out of their time spent volunteering. Having this conversation will help you find a role that will be both interesting and rewarding and the right fit for the individual.

Whilst providing this kind of support to new volunteers isn't always easy during a busy RDA session, investing time and getting things right at this stage means volunteers are more likely to stay in the long run.

Find out Hidden Talents

Be sure to ask all volunteers what their skills and interests are. This will help you put people into roles where they can have the greatest impact. If you haven't done this for a while, doing a skills audit where you ask some questions about people's talents and interests can be useful for everyone involved in the group – volunteers, parents and carers and participants. You never know what hidden talents you might find!

Volunteering Behind the Scenes

Take some time to explain the variety of roles within your group from trustees through to tacking up. Most volunteers new to RDA will not be aware of all the work that goes on behind the scenes to make RDA possible and may want to get involved! In the case of retirees some may have the time, the skills or experience to take on additional or alternative roles which they may not have originally considered, such as becoming a trustee or organising a group holiday. But be sure to avoid overloading volunteers – delegating large jobs between a number of people is most effective.



THE RDA COMMUNITY

For some people, stepping away from employment can be a lonely and isolating experience.

Volunteering with RDA can provide a vibrant community where volunteers feel they can take part in something special and that their contribution in this is recognised and valued.

Building time for social interaction between volunteers is really important, it can help everyone learn more about one another and lead to more effective communication, and a greater team feeling. Volunteers who are happy and motivated in their roles are more likely to continue to give their time to your group.

Below are some suggestions for building a greater community feel at your group

- **Organise social events** – Some volunteers are motivated by the opportunity to meet new people. It's difficult to really get to know people in what can be the busy short bursts of an RDA session. Try to find ways you can bring people together. This might mean finding time to go for lunch together once in a while or doing something simple like sharing cake after a session.
- **Celebrate Birthdays** – Try and remember volunteers birthdays if you can, especially if they volunteer for you on them.
- **Volunteer Awards** – A great way to make volunteers feel special is by recognising their contribution with volunteer awards. We have a variety of volunteer awards all available for free on our Group Order Form
- **Say Thank You** – The simple gesture of saying thank you at the end of a volunteers' contribution can go a long way to making them feel valued and part of the team. This is particularly important for volunteers who are keen to give something back to society. Saying thank you helps them understand they are making a positive difference.



PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS

Some retirees are looking to start a fresh challenge and do something completely different from their working life – perhaps something they have always been interested in doing but never had the time.

You may find that some volunteers are looking for experience and responsibility they may not be able to get elsewhere; for example experience of stable work, coaching, IT work, fundraising or event management. Others may be looking for a taste of everything or on the other hand some may be looking for a role with very little responsibility.

Green Card Certificates

Our green card training programme is a great introduction to volunteering in an RDA setting and is a great way for a volunteer to either learn a brand new set of skills or to put existing skills to good use. Once a volunteer has completed their basic training you can send their green card off to National Office to obtain a certificate.

The RDA Coaching Pathway

Some retirees may specifically be interested in coaching, particularly those who have prior experience or an equestrian background. Retirement may have granted the perfect opportunity to dedicate more time to something that they love. Working towards qualifications can be a great way of engaging and retaining volunteers interested in getting involved in this aspect of RDA.

Lifelong Learning

RDA has a variety of courses and opportunities which can facilitate those retirees who are interested in continuing learning new skills or building on them later in life. We offer practical workshops in subjects such as fundraising, PR, marketing and communications, safeguarding, volunteer management, participant experience and governance as well as our e-learning programmes available at www.rda-learning.org.uk. Having a new project with associated training and responsibilities can help new retirees transition from working life to retirement.



FLEXIBLE VOLUNTEERING

Retirees are increasingly busy people and often have lots of other responsibilities – perhaps looking after grandchildren or being members of other clubs, societies or volunteering for a number of charities. To ensure volunteering at your group is appealing to busy people make sure you promote opportunities which are flexible and can fit around the other things people may be doing.

Looking Beyond Weekly Volunteering

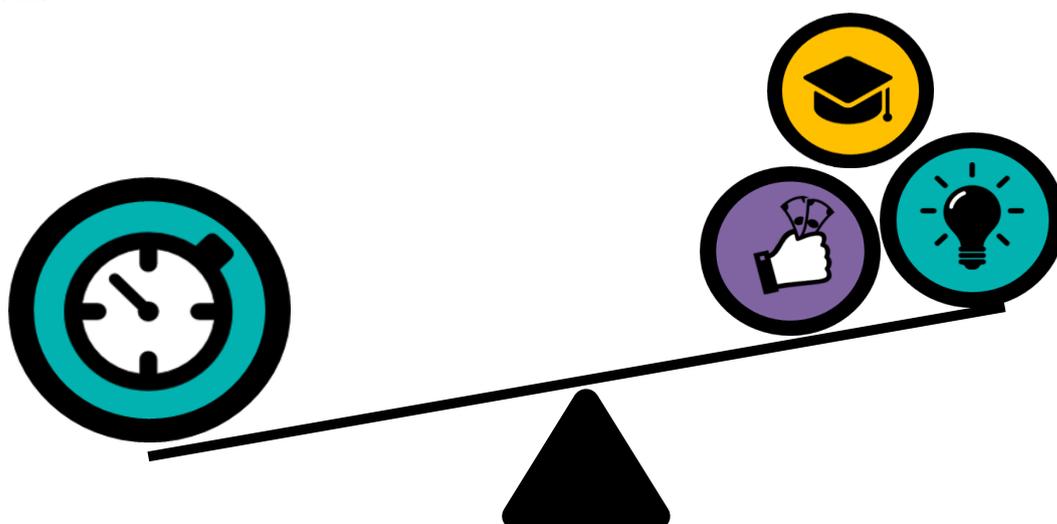
All RDA Groups need a pool of volunteers who have a regular commitment to the group, however not all volunteers will want to give this level of commitment. Some may wish to dip in and out of volunteering as their other life commitments allow but can still make a really significant contribution to the group. Try to think of some roles or projects which will allow this kind of irregular volunteering. For example you may need someone to do DIY or maintenance or tow a trailer on an occasional basis.

Adapt Roles

Adapting roles helps keep people interested and involved. Why not think about giving new volunteers a taste of lots of different roles within the group? This might suit someone who is taking up volunteering for the first time and gives them a chance to find what they enjoy and what they are good at.

Volunteering from Home

Are there things that need doing at your group which can be done away from the yard? Perhaps it's some of the paperwork or producing posters for a fundraising event or writing grant applications to local trust funds. This kind of volunteering may be especially suited to busy retirees who have professional skills they want to use to benefit your group. This may also be an attractive role for someone who wants to help a local charity but doesn't want to get "hands on" with horses and ponies.



FURTHER SUPPORT

If you have any questions about anything you've read or want to find out more then don't hesitate to contact us at RDA National Office.

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RDA Volunteer Coordinator

For support on matters relating to volunteering

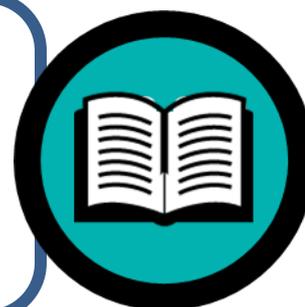
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RDA Magazine

RDA Magazine comes out four times per year and is packed with news and features to keep you up to date with all things RDA. Sign up for free at:

www.rda.org.uk/subscribe/



RDA Website – www.rda.org.uk

The RDA website lists all important news updates as well as all of our resources for groups in the Running Your Group section.



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