

# The Big Help Out

## Campaign FAQs for Volunteer-Involving Organisations (VIOs) Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) audiences



### PLEASE NOTE

- The information and guidance contained in this document is designed primarily for volunteer-involving organisations seeking to engage with The Big Help Out campaign. It is written with them in mind and may therefore not be suitable for all campaign audiences.
- The campaign is evolving in real time, including technical build elements, meaning some information here may be subject to change. We will attempt to update in good time where this happens.
- If you have particular questions please submit them via our enquiry form.
- Ver 1.0: 13 March 2023

## GENERAL CAMPAIGN QUESTIONS

### What is [The Big Help Out](#)?

- A celebration of volunteering in the coronation year
- A national campaign highlighting the importance and benefits of volunteering
- An opportunity to drive potential new volunteers to you and to promote your volunteering offer to them.

### What are its objectives?

- To inspire people across the country to lend a hand and make a difference, across the summer and beyond
- To bring communities together through celebration and community spirit
- To reach and encourage new audiences into volunteering - those who wouldn't usually think volunteering was for them.

### Who is behind it? Who is involved?

- The campaign was founded by the [Shaping the Future with Volunteering Group](#), which includes some of Britain's largest volunteer-involving charities and is co-chaired by Scouts and Royal Voluntary Service. The Group is working in partnership with [The Together Coalition](#) to deliver The Big Help Out, supported by DCMS and the Royal Households.
- Members of Shaping the Future with Volunteering include: AgeUK, British Red Cross, Cats Protection, Citizens Advice, CPRE, Cruse Bereavement Support, Girl Guiding, Guide Dogs, National Trust, NCT, NSPCC, Papworth Trust, Ramblers, RNIB, RNLI, Rotary, Royal Voluntary Service, RSPB, RSPCA, Samaritans, Sea Cadets, Scouts, St John Ambulance, Stroke Association, TCV, Trussell Trust, Volunteering Matters, YHA.

- Financial support for the campaign comes from a range of partners, including UK central government. The Big Help Out's digital infrastructure - its volunteering hub and public-facing app - is a bespoke platform supplied by [Doit.life](https://www.doit.life/).

### **How will the Big Help Out support charities to recruit more volunteers?**

- The campaign, backed by celebrities and national media profile, will inspire the public to help out in their communities, starting at Coronation Weekend and lasting through the summer.
- Those inspired to get involved will be directed to the Big Help Out app, where they can quickly and easily search for a range of opportunities to suit their preferences - different causes, ways of getting involved - at times suitable for them. Members of the public are notified of all opportunities matching their preferences.
- Charities and other Volunteer-Involving Organisations will be able to reach these audiences by listing their opportunities on the volunteering hub. Organisations interested in doing this should visit [www.thebighelpout.org.uk](https://www.thebighelpout.org.uk) to register their interest.

### **Why is The Big Help Out happening now?**

- The Coronation year provides a unique opportunity to capture new interest in volunteering and channel that towards groups and causes that need them.
- The volunteering demographic is changing - rates of formal volunteering fell significantly during Covid-19 and some sectors have struggled to recover. Rates amongst older formal volunteers fell sharpest (Community Life Survey 2021, DCMS) and anecdotally we know many have chosen not to/been unable to return.
- The Big Help Out campaign recognises that a new generation of volunteers may have different expectations and motivations to those of the last 'civic core'. And whilst traditional patterns of volunteering and attitudes to volunteering are still very much alive and valid, it is generally recognised that new approaches are required for those newer to volunteering. The [Vision for Volunteering](#) initiative (2022), which heard from hundreds of leaders in volunteering, the majority locally-engaged, captured the features of this new dynamic strongly.

### **What's happening beyond the May Bank Holiday weekend itself? And how does The Big Help Out link with other key moments in the volunteering calendar?**

- The Coronation Bank Holiday on May 8th provides a natural focus point for launching the Big Help Out's active phase - though the full media campaign will run throughout the summer, meaning opportunities can be posted and taken up at any point, with individuals receiving notifications matching their preferences as they are added.
- Other big moments for volunteering across the summer include Volunteers Week (1-7 June) and Thank You Day (2 July), as well as many of the local or regional initiatives such as the Mayor of London's Community Weekend in June. They can provide a complementary and amplifying role to The Big Help Out - and vice versa. Taken together this calendar represents something of a summer long 'Festival of Volunteering', with plenty of opportunities to keep volunteering in the public eye and media spotlight.
- Beyond the structure of the volunteering hub, which is geared towards giving new volunteers the best possible experience, there are no restrictions on how to use The Big Help Out with or alongside your other campaigns. Groups and networks are encouraged to think creatively about how they can use the hub, the campaign itself and the collateral produced to amplify their own campaigns and key moments.

## Will the Big Help Out run every year?

- It's too soon to say. This is the first time a sustained national campaign and digital brokerage solution has been tried, and it's being put together at some pace. Campaign partners will reflect on its successes and learning points later in the year. Those inspired to volunteer will also be surveyed so that we can better understand outcomes for them.
- All those invested in UK volunteering are encouraged to make the most of the opportunity and reflect/feedback on the elements that were most useful, instructive or challenging. Whether the Big Help Out runs again in the future or not, this is a rare opportunity to test interventions of this kind.
- All those participating are encouraged to think about the learning and insights generated on a number of different levels, including (but not limited to):
  - the numbers of new volunteers engaged and retained;
  - the impact of the national media campaign on public attitudes and awareness;
  - the efficacy of the brokerage routes and volunteering hub;
  - the interface between national and local volunteering infrastructure in joining up opportunities and pathways.

## WHY SHOULD VOLUNTEER-INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS GET INVOLVED?

### How can The Big Help Out inspire more volunteers?

- Historically, we know that national moments can shine a spotlight on volunteering and capture significant attention. Sometimes these moments are celebratory or cultural (London 2012, Hull City of Culture 2017) and at others are more challenging, call for help in a moment of acute need (such as the community response to the Covid-19 pandemic).
- Though these examples are unique and focused on specific acts of volunteering, they all faced challenges in matching demand and supply - more people stepped forward to volunteer than capacity in those programmes could accommodate. This inevitably led to a disappointing experience for some.
- The Big Help Out is trying a different approach to meet this challenge by combining the power of a national media campaign with digital 'single front door' - open and free to all volunteer-involving organisations who wish to promote their roles and wider opportunities to participate.
- The BHO app has been designed to appeal particularly to those new to volunteering or who may have experienced barriers or challenges in the past. It seeks to give them a quick, clear and easy way to identify and select their preferences and receive opportunities. Recent research and polling suggests there are many people are primed to volunteer, or to volunteer more than they have done in the past, who may respond to this volunteer-led approach:
  - During Covid-19 12.4m people volunteered, 4.6m for first time, of which 3.8m want to do so again ([Talk Together, The Together Coalition, 2021](#))
  - 49% of people say they intend to volunteer in 2023, with young people (18 to 24) leading the way (69%) ([TNLCF polling, Jan 2023](#))
  - And charities are increasingly confident about this instinct - a net balance of 12% of VCSEs say their volunteer numbers have grown in last 3 months, and net balance of 20% expect them to grow further in next 3 months ([Pro Bono Economics/Nottingham Uni, Jan 2023](#))

### **How will a national media campaign make a difference?**

- With a strong media presence, the media campaign is an attempt to tap into this propensity to volunteer and channel it towards a diverse supply of volunteering opportunities across the UK. Evidence supporting this kind of information-led, opportunity-driven approach includes:
  - The value of a national campaign prompting people to volunteer: Among those who have never volunteered, one of the most frequently cited reasons is that they have never thought about it (19%).
  - Offering taster sessions: Among those interested in at least one way of giving time, people are more attracted to opportunities where they can dip in and out of activities (53%) or one-off activities and events (49%) than give time on a regular basis (30%)
  - Offering varying commitment options for those new to volunteering: of those who have never volunteered before, 21% said not wanting to make an ongoing
  - commitment was the main reason they had not volunteered up to now.
  - Offering flexibility: Among those who had not volunteered in the last year, some said they could be encouraged to get involved. The things that would most encourage them to get involved are having flexibility with their time committed (50%), flexibility with the way they give their help (eg doing it from home)
  - *All Statistics taken from [NCVO Time Well Spent, 2019](#).*

### **Has The Big Help Out been designed to support larger, national charities more than smaller, local ones?**

- No - the campaign is built around the needs and motivations of new volunteers. If the opportunities posted by smaller or local organisations match those they will appear in the app's results in exactly the same way as those from national organisations.
- In fact smaller charities may have more to gain from increased volunteer engagement - research shows they are much less likely to engage paid staff than larger ones, and rely much more on volunteer engagement ([Pro Bono Economics/Nottingham Uni, Jan 2023](#))
- And many more people who volunteer choose to do so locally, in their local area, rather than for national organisations or causes. 81% of 'recent volunteers' did so within their local communities. [Time Well Spent, NCVO 2019](#).

### **What promotional materials will be available?**

- Assets are covered in the full Partnership Media Pack, available from the Big Help Out website.

### **Are leading sector organisations supporting The Big Help Out?**

- Yes - NCVO and NAVCA are backing The Big Help Out as are organisations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and UK wide bodies such as the UK Community Foundations.

## HOW THE VOLUNTEERING HUB AND APP WORK?

### How will the volunteer hub work for volunteer-involving organisations?

- Volunteer-involving organisations will be able to start using the volunteering hub in March, shortly before the public launch of the BHO on March 20th. They will need to create an account to do this, though organisations that have already registered via the BHO website have already started their account creation process.
- These organisations will receive a personalised link to complete account setup once the hub is ready, others will be able to start their account creation process from The Big Help Out website following the 'I am an organisation' pathway. Those who already have an account with Doit.life will also have streamlined routes into the hub.
- A CMS/CRM (Customer Management System/Customer Relationship Management platform) is included with the VIO dashboard within the hub - this has functionality to manage sign up to events and opportunities, communications with those registered and the core opportunity types of the Big Help Out campaign (see below).
- VIOs can use the CRM to manage their BHO activities if they wish, or seek to encourage those registered into their own systems if they prefer, though this will largely be a manual process - the volunteering hub is a temporary piece of infrastructure designed to support the current campaign and provide the user with the most seamless experience possible. Integration with other platforms is therefore limited. Contact us if you have specific questions about this.

### How does the hub work for prospective volunteers?

- Individuals will be able to access the BHO app once it is launched publicly, scheduled for Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March. This will be their point of main access to the volunteering and wider opportunities delivered through the campaign. A web-based version will also be available.
- When using the app, individuals will have the option to take a short 'quiz' designed to refine their preferences. This will give them personalised search results. No personal details are required until individuals register for an event or opportunity.
- App-based results will also include details of their local Volunteer Centres as an additional source of opportunities.

### What kind of volunteering offers or opportunities can be posted to the volunteering hub?

- Potential volunteers directed to the app will be asked to select a number of preferences for the kinds of opportunities they are looking for. Use these as your guide to what to post. Volunteers can select multiple options from those below:
  - **Type of activity** - these include one off taster sessions (opportunities to try volunteering, or light versions of existing roles), information sessions (opportunities to learn more about what volunteering with you would look like) and taking an action (small but meaningful things individuals can do to support your cause) or ongoing roles (new or existing volunteering roles).
  - **Timing and Setting** - group or solo activity, in person or digital/remote, on the May 8th Bank Holiday or beyond the Bank Holiday (all subsequent times)
  - **Cause** - a range of categories will be listed.

## How much flexibility do we have over how we use the volunteering hub?

- Some basic engagement with the volunteering hub is essential if you hope to benefit from the interest in volunteering generated by the national campaign. National messaging will direct all those interested towards the volunteering hub. By 'basic engagement' we mean you will need to create an organisational account (or use an existing one).
- However, beyond this there are several ways in which you might use the hub creatively. The BHO Team understands that many VIOs have their own recruitment and engagement platforms and there are good reasons for wanting to use these systems as far as possible.
  - **At a basic level** VIOs can create an organisation account, list some of your preferred opportunities (to appear in search results) and encourage users to follow links through to your own site for more information, or to sign up.
  - **At a more involved level** VIOs can list their opportunities in full and manage the sign up and engagement process through the hub itself. You can then encourage those interested to make a more regular or sustained commitment through direct approaches.
  - **Infrastructure organisations, such as Volunteer Centres**, could use the hub to advertise a range of local volunteering opportunities not individually listed, on behalf of local organisations using them, should they wish to do this.

## Advantages of using the Hub's full functionality

- The hub and app have been designed with the volunteer's experience in mind - a minimal number of clicks and opportunities organised around their bespoke preferences. The more you use the hub's functionality, the more chance you will have of giving them a good initial experience, and of converting them into something more sustained or committed further down the line.
- Bear in mind that those curious about volunteering may be managing a range of different opportunities through the app and so diverting them out of it and into your systems may not initially appeal. We would encourage you to think about the types of volunteers you're seeking to attract and which routes and opportunities would work best for them.
- The Big Help Out has the potential to be one of the most significant opportunities for volunteer mobilisation we have seen in this country, so consider the investment of your time in using the hub against the potential benefits of reaching new audiences.

## Do we have to have volunteering opportunities on May 8th?

- No - May 8th is a significant focal point of the campaign but you don't have to offer volunteering opportunities on that day. You have the whole summer to be engaged and members of the public will be able to select from May 8th opportunities, those beyond May 8th, or both, when they select their preferences. We recognise many volunteers and VIOs will not be open or volunteering on Bank Holiday weekend, for many different reasons.

## Is it free to use The Big Help Out volunteering platform?

- Yes - there are no financial charges involved.

## NEED SOMETHING ELSE?

Have a question we haven't covered? Complete our [enquiry form](#) and we'll do our best to come back to you directly, or cover it in a future version of this FAQs. There are also a series of [Do It user guides](#) relating to the volunteering hub, which may be helpful.