

LEAD VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

[We are ambitious](#) in reaching more people affected by Crohn's and Colitis and helping the general public to better understand these conditions. Local networks play a significant role in helping to achieve this in local communities across the UK and the Lead Volunteer role is key in supporting a team of volunteers to deliver effective and impactful awareness raising activities.

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1. How to lead a Local Network

A good Lead Volunteer enables the Organising Team (OT) to work effectively together as a team. Everyone will lead with a different style, but the Lead Volunteer will need to have a mixture of the following skills/attributes:

Facilitator | Encourager | Team Player | Delegator | Effective Communicator | Organiser

An effective OT is committed, enthusiastic, punctual, flexible, communicative, reliable (and much more!) and it is these characteristics that the Lead Volunteer needs to model to the OT.

This is an important volunteer role for Crohn's & Colitis UK. The expectation is that the Lead Volunteer will liaise effectively with their staff contact in contributing towards the charity's vision, mission and values.

Please see below for some of the different aspects of leadership required in this role...

Representing Crohn's & Colitis UK

- Champion our initiatives and campaigns; lead the team so that local outputs reflect and contribute to our national projects and the [values](#).
- Champion the training and development opportunities offered by the charity, ensuring adequate representation from volunteers on the OT.
- Follow the charity's policies and procedures as provided in induction materials and available through our Network Volunteering Pack and online Volunteer Resources; ensure that all OT activity is conducted in line with this.
- Stay up-to-date with information that affects your role as communicated by the Volunteering Team, e.g. The Snapshot, Lead Alerts and training opportunities.

Relationships

- Maintain regular communication with your contact in the Volunteering Team, diarising regular catch-ups as required by the role.
- Be compassionate and welcoming – introduce new volunteers to the rest of the team and help them to understand the team, roles and how things work
- Build relationships with each OT volunteer – be empathetic of personal circumstances and value their time and contributions; maintain communication outside of OT meetings to keep them engaged.

- Seek to resolve problems and other difficult situations by using the guidance provided. Inform your staff contact at the earliest possible stage.
- Establish effective local healthcare links and the maintain or develop work with an assigned Clinical Advisor.

Teamwork

- Play a full and active part in creating a culture that works for the benefit of the team.
- Everyone should feel valued and able to contribute – discuss with volunteers how their skills and interests can be utilised in their role.
- Lead the team in devising some aims to provide focus for the year’s activity
- Have healthy discussions and work towards a consensus.
- Recognise that a key part of your leadership role is to delegate activity to others – don’t try and do it all yourself – you cannot and (should not) organise, facilitate or deliver all activity.
- Encourage all other volunteers to take ownership of their suggestions/suggested activity; advise them how to complete the tasks they initiate.

Meetings & Events

- Encourage emphasis on events that delivers the greatest impact, creating real change for people affected by Crohn’s and Colitis
- Commit to between 4 (quarterly) and 12 (monthly) OT meetings each year; the regularity of meetings provides a consistent volunteering experience, helping volunteers feel engaged, motivated and to plan their time effectively.
- Arrange OT meetings, ensuring an agenda circulated sufficiently in advance.
- Facilitate OT meetings, ensuring that they keep to time, are effective and action-focused and that all volunteers leave with a clear understanding of their tasks and future meeting/events arrangements.
- Arrange for OT meeting notes to be compiled and distributed to all OT volunteers and to the Volunteering Team.
- Assign actions and roles to all OT volunteers (where relevant) in the planning and delivery of events. Liaise with others to ensure that comprehensive details of the event are provided to the Volunteering Team for promotion on the website and to our members.
- Where in attendance, welcome new volunteers and introduce guests and speakers.

2. How you are supported

The Volunteering Team are here to support you in your role as a Lead Volunteer.

You will find a wealth of resources form us at www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/vr

Contact: networks@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk | 01727 734 475

Each Local Network has a staff member assigned to support you and they will regularly liaise with you as the key contact for the Local Network; you will then be able to share news and information with the rest of the OT. Please do contact the staff member on the details they have provided to get access to guidance, advice, support or other resources that will help you in your role.

3. How to hand over the role

When you come towards the end of your role as a Lead Volunteer, it is important that you plan sufficient time to effectively handover the role to the incoming Lead Volunteer or to any other interim arrangement made by the Volunteering Team. The handover of information, papers and events/activity is crucial to the future success of the Local Network – ensuring activity runs smoothly after your departure – and this transition to a new Lead Volunteer is seen as an important part of your role.

Outgoing Lead Volunteer

1. Inform your staff contact of your intention to stand down from the role (ideally with six months prior notice).
2. Discuss with your staff contact the impact that this will have on the Local Network and whether there are any suitable OT members to suggest as future Lead Volunteers. Discuss how best to communicate this information to the rest of the OT.
3. Support your staff contact with information requests e.g. local advertisement as they will be seeking to recruit a suitable alternative.
4. Produce an inventory of all the items to handover to a new Lead Volunteer.

Following the successful recruitment of a new Lead Volunteer...

5. Arrange to meet with the incoming Lead Volunteer – they will have questions! Handover any physical items that they will be required to store at home. Discuss the Local Network's activity, plans and issues being mindful that they may not be familiar with Crohn's, Colitis or our work.
6. Invite the incoming Lead Volunteer to an OT meeting to observe and meet the rest of the OT.
7. Be available for a short period (4-8 weeks) after the arrival of the new Lead Volunteer, in case they have any appropriate questions during this initial period.
8. Keep your staff contact up-to-date and in the loop as you work through this process.

If your intention is to stand down from the Lead Volunteer role but stay involved on the OT as an Awareness Volunteer, be prepared to completely stand down from the OT at the request of your staff contact. In some instances, it is helpful for incoming Lead Volunteers to 'find their feet' without the presence of the previous Lead Volunteer on the team.

Incoming Lead Volunteer

1. Meet with the outgoing Lead Volunteer to collect an inventory of any physical resources or other information you might require. Certain resources will be in need to be stored at your home for use with the Local Network.
2. Ask questions! Your meeting is an important chance ask questions of the outgoing Lead Volunteer – your staff contact can advise you, but you may find it useful to know: what /how much activity the OT is involved in; what are the passions of the existing OT; whether there have been/are problems to solve; areas to improve; potential plans for the future; upcoming training/development days etc.
3. Attend one or more OT meetings to observe how activity is currently conducted and meet the OT.
4. Afterwards, ask questions of the outgoing Lead Volunteer and your staff contact where necessary.
5. You may find it beneficial to contact the Outgoing Lead Volunteer whilst in the first few weeks of your role – they *may* be available for the first 4-8 weeks.
6. You may find it beneficial for the Outgoing Lead Volunteer to remain involved as an Awareness Volunteer on the OT. If you are interested in having them stay involved, you can encourage them to do so. However, there are aware that you may choose to have space to 'find your feet'.
7. It is crucial that you diarise regular catch-ups with your staff contact, so you can both plan time effectively. They will be there to help you with your volunteering, assist you in completing the induction and many other aspects of the role.
8. You may also find it helpful to meet with the Finance Volunteer to discuss the Network's finances.