Onboarding new Volunteers

- Building Onboarding into your Team
- Supporting your new Volunteers
- Welcome and Onboarding steps

Building Onboarding into your Team

We know that one of the main reasons that volunteers stay with XR is that they find a community with us. So how can we ensure that we are as welcoming to as many people, and as many different people, as possible?

The Job of Welcoming

It is an integrator's job to find, contact and induct new volunteers into the team. It is the whole team's job to welcome them.

Make Sure:

1. a team member steps up to have a 1-1 chat with the new volunteer in their first week!
2. a team member steps up to be the new Volunteer's "Point Person" or "Buddy" for their first few weeks, that single port-of-call if the new volunteer has any questions*; and
3. the team invites the new voluntees to any social gatherings coming up or any activities they may wish to join.
   - (**This is especially important if you organise in multiple chats, ensuring they know what's happening**)

A buddy is vital for helping new members to feel welcome and find their feet!

The buddy's role/responsibility is:

- To make initial contact in the form of a friendly email, introducing yourself, possibly offering to meet for coffee or have a call
- To properly welcome them into XR by answering their questions, and allaying any fears they might have about getting more involved
- To generally be a friendly voice on the end of a phone and support them in finding their own place in XR

Some ideas for how a buddy can support a new XR volunteer:

- General meetups in a café to chat about their interests in XR, ask how they would like to be involved

- Inviting your buddy to a meeting that you are going to; you'll be the friendly person already there, so they won't have to go into a room of strangers
- Introducing your buddy to other XR people who are in areas that your buddy is interested in (art, media, outreach, performance actions)
- If they are ready to become involved, invite your buddy onto your local telegram group

As the Integrator, do think about how the local group will keep track of who is buddying whom.

New Volunteer in the Chat!

When a new volunteer is added to your chat (Mattermost, Signal, Telegram...) make sure to say Hi and welcome them. Make sure they know the purpose of various chats and where they can ask for help.

A Volunteer's First Meeting

Do

1. ensure that the team has included their roles and pronouns in their screen names **or** start off with a round of names and role descriptions; and
2. have a least one person offer to stay behind to check in with the new Volunteer, see how they found their first meeting and if they have any questions.

Don't

1. use lots of acronyms and XR jargon! Try to have someone there to call people out on their jargon and ask them to define things.

Supporting your new Volunteers

Helping Volunteers stick!

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations produced a national survey on the volunteer experience- Time Well Spent 2023, Rei Kanemura. It is interesting to see why volunteers stay and why they step back.

Access needs

Find out about your new volunteer's access needs and any other ways they may need to be kept safe. These may include any disclosed disability that might affect their participation in our community (such as the use of assistive technologies to read emails and the web) as well as participation in events (such as physical access needs, mental-health issues and dietary or other invisible needs).

Gathering this information must always take account of someone's right not to disclose anything, as well as their need for proper support if they do disclose something.

You can find advice on ensuring that you support volunteers with access needs in the Access and Inclusion section of the toolkit.

Keeping each other safe

Any organisation needs to keep its members safe, and we need to make sure that we know if anyone in our community might be classed as vulnerable. If you find any concerns related to a volunteer (whether about their needs or about their potential impact on other volunteers), you may need to draw up a support plan so that volunteers can be protected from anyone who might harm them, either deliberately or accidentally. You should draw up a support plan in consultation with the volunteer who is its focus, and assure them that we want them to take part and are aiming to provide them with the support they need to do this safely.

Where else can volunteers get support?

Please signpost your New volunteers to the pages **Care and Respect** and **Inclusivity** in the **Intro to XR**.

Please check your New volunteers have read these and understand the behaviour they are expected to follow.

Welcome and Onboarding steps

You have an applicant! What next?

You can **download the flowchart** as a pdf with 'clickable links'.

Or skip to below the Visual Flowchart to **view an accessible text version** of the flowchart.

You can contact Recruitment Support Reception on Mattermost or email volunteer+rs@extinctionrebellion.uk if you would like guidance and support on how to follow all the steps in this flowchart. The Recruitment Support Team offers tailor-made workshops for individual teams about how to recruit and onboard.

Visual Flowchart

YOU HAVE AN APPLICANT!
WHAT NEXT?

Acknowledge

Send a message ASAP - preferably within 24hrs
Tell the applicant when and how you will be in touch

Security check (for sensitive roles)

Are they vouched-for by someone known?

Call

A friendly phone call is best - you get a better idea of the person

Ask them about themselves - start to build trust
Explain the role
Can they make your meetings?
What are their skills?
Do they have access needs and can they be accommodated?

For sensitive roles, request social media names for background checks

Decide

Are they a good fit for your role? Or another role with your team?
Update the contact history on:
Volunteer Website **and** Reach Volunteering

No

Let them know

- Arrange a time to phone; inform them gently
- Reassure them that they're valued and there's a place for them in XR
- Ask if they'd like feedback and if they say yes, be kind and honest

Signpost to other options to find another role

- A **Get Involved** session
- The **Get Involved** page on the website or, if needed,
- **Email Recruitment Support** volunteer@extinctionrebellion.uk

No

Yes

Let them know and send some simple info

- Confirm they agree with the **Principles and Values of XR**
- **Intro to XR talk** and / or **Intro to XR** on the Rebel Toolkit
- Invite them to join the **XRUK mailing list** if they haven't already
- **Invite them to meet the team** (day, time, Zoom link)

Meet

- **Welcome them warmly** and thank them as they join the meeting
- **Deep check-ins:** explain who you all are, your roles and some info about your life outside of XR
- Invite them to introduce themselves
- Explain **hand signals**
- **Avoid jargon / acronyms.** Encourage them to ask for clarifications

Debrief

- Stay on to answer questions (or arrange a later time)
- Reassure them that it will take time but that there's plenty of support
- Do they still want to join the team?

Yes

Data security

If they'll have access to personal data, talk about keeping it safe and ask them to ask them to watch the 6 minute video and then test for understanding, and then sign the Volunteer Agreement.

Welcome pack

- Send them your team's Welcome Pack [link coming] and arrange to go through it
- Can a team member be a buddy / point of contact?

Add to team comms channels

- Check they know how to use them

Text version of the flowchart

1. Acknowledge

- Send a message ASAP - preferably within 24hrs
- Tell the applicant when and how you will be in touch

2. Security check (for sensitive roles)

- Are they vouched for by someone known?

3. Call

- A friendly phone call is best - you get a better idea of the person
- Ask them about themselves - start to build trust
- Explain the role
- Can they make your meetings?
- What are their skills?
- Do they have access needs and can they be accommodated?
- For sensitive roles, request social media names for background checks

4. Decide

- Are they a good fit for your role? (or another role with your team?)
- Update contact history on Volunteer Website and Reach Volunteering
- Skip to **YES** **OR** **NO**

YES

5. Let them know and send some simple info

- Confirm they agree with the Principles and Values of XR
- Intro to XR talk and / or Intro to XR on the Rebel Toolkit
- Invite them to join the XRUK mailing list if they haven't already
- Invite them to meet the team (day, time, Zoom link)

6. Meet

- Welcome them warmly and thank them as they join the meeting
- Deep check-ins: explain who you all are, your roles and some info about your life outside of XR
- Invite them to introduce themselves
- Explain hand signals

- Avoid jargon / acronyms. Encourage them to ask for clarifications

7. Debrief

- Stay on to answer questions (or arrange a later time)
- Reassure them that it will take time but that there's plenty of support
- Do they still want to join the team? If **Yes** continue with the steps, or go to **No**

8. Data security

- If they'll have access to personal data, talk about keeping it safe and ask them to ask them to watch the 6 minute video and then test for understanding and then sign the Volunteer Agreement

9. Welcome pack

- Send them your team's Welcome Pack and arrange to go through it
- Can a team member be a buddy / point of contact?

10. Add to team comms channels

- Check they know how to use them
- If not, sign-post them to the Tech Support sessions
- Welcome them into the chat

11. Starter task

- Something simple to complete before you next meet
- If taking on an EC / IC role, begin shadowing

12. Ongoing care

- Create a debrief schedule based on their needs
- If interested, invite them to a parent circle meeting

Congratulations - you have a new team member!

NO

Let them know

- Arrange a time to phone; inform them gently

- Reassure them that they’re valued and there’s a place for them in XR
- Ask if they’d like feedback and if they say yes, be kind and honest

Signpost to other options to find another role

- A Get Involved session
- The Get Involved page on the website or, if needed,
- Email Recruitment Support volunteer+rs@extinctionrebellion.uk