

Volunteer Screening and Checks

When recruiting volunteers, you can carry out a range of checks to ensure the right fit for your organisation. While some checks may be required by policy, others can provide a broader view of a candidate's suitability for your team and the role.

Interview the volunteer

A face-to-face or virtual meeting allows you to get to know the volunteer, understand their motivations, and discuss the role in detail.

Look for alignment with your organisation's values, communication skills, and attitude towards teamwork. This is also an opportunity for the volunteer to ask questions and feel comfortable with the role.

Good practice:

- Use the same core questions for every applicant.
- Focus on what the role involves, not personal background.
- Describe the role clearly, including any physical, emotional, time or safety requirements

Check the Resource:Recruitment and the Human Rights Act for guidance around what you can and can't ask in an interview.

Reference Checks

Reference checks help confirm a volunteer's reliability, suitability, and past performance.

With their consent, contact previous employers, volunteer organisations, or personal references to verify experience and ask about skills, attitude, and how they handled challenges.

Good practice:

- Get the applicant's consent before contacting referees.
- Ask for referees who know the person in a relevant setting.
- Use a standard reference template so every applicant is treated the same.
- Keep notes confidential and only share them with people who need to know.

Criminal History Check

Some roles especially those working with children, vulnerable adults, or sensitive information—require a criminal history check. In New Zealand, this could be a Ministry of Justice Criminal Record Check or Police Vetting.

Always follow privacy guidelines and only request checks that are relevant to the role. See VW Resource Checking Criminal Records for more details.

Good practice:

- Only request checks that are necessary for the role.
- Explain why the check is needed.
- Give people a chance to discuss any result if appropriate.
- Keep information secure and confidential.



Not every volunteer will be the right fit for your organisation. Completing appropriate checks helps you make informed decisions about a volunteer's suitability for both the role and your organisation, reducing the risk of issues later.