

TIPS FOR GOOD MEETINGS

STUDENT-LED VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME

Before you organise a meeting with your volunteers or fellow project leaders, think about:

- Who is going to book the room or create the virtual meeting link?
- Has everyone been given plenty of notice?
- Is the meeting at a time and/or a place that's convenient?
- What is the purpose of the meeting?
- What decisions need to be made?
- Who is going to write an agenda? How will they ensure that all the important topics are covered?
- Are any items to be discussed likely to cause conflict?
- Who is going to chair?
- Who is going to minute?
- Who is going to distribute the minutes?
- Do you have an attendance sheet for the meeting?
- How will people introduce themselves?
- How will we ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak?
- How will we encourage people who don't usually attend to turn up?
- Are we going to have refreshments? Who will organise this?
- How will we ensure that the meeting finishes on time?

Some other things to consider:

Agendas

- Email the agenda around beforehand and ask people to add items on to it.
- At the start of the meeting, check that everyone is happy with the agenda and ask whether there are any other items for discussion.
- Always include "Any Other Business" (A.O.B) to ensure that everything is covered.
- Always include "Date of Next Meeting" – to remind you to arrange it!

Be inclusive

- Think about the venue. Is the room somewhere that's accessible to everyone?
- Organise seating so everyone can see each other, and so that everyone feels equal (sitting in a circle is best).
- Think about the online platform that you intend to use and check that it is accessible for everyone.
- Greet latecomers at an appropriate point, very briefly summarising what's already been discussed.

Make new people feel welcome

- Appoint a 'doorkeeper' to meet and greet people - especially new ones - as they arrive at a meeting.
- Introduce everyone at the start

- Explain how your meetings work.
- Avoid in-jokes and jargon.
- Make sure you explain agenda topics before launching into discussion.
- Don't be afraid to stop and give room for questions and clarification.
- Create plenty of opportunities for new people to take on tasks.
- Afterwards, ask newcomers what their first impressions were.

Keep it upbeat

- Ensure you have a chair who can keep the meeting moving and ensure everyone has a fair say.
- Have a set start and finish time – and check that everyone can stick to those times. If someone has to leave early, it's good to give them the opportunity to say this at the start.
- Halfway through the meeting, say “we've another half hour (or however much time) to go”. Keep your eye on the clock!
- Schedule a social time before or after the meeting, so that you can focus on the business of the meeting.
- Have a break in the middle of long meetings.

Minutes or action points

Minutes do not have to be a word-for-word transcript of what was said. Aim to be as succinct as possible – just record:

- **Action points.** Say what action is needed, who is doing it, and when it needs to be done by. Highlight them. Read them out at the end of the meeting to remind everyone what they agreed to do! Go over them at the start of the next meeting to check they've been done. You should read out the ideas and action points that you think have been settled on before writing them down, to check for agreement.
- **Decisions the group takes.** You might want to briefly put down the rationale behind the decision.

When you send round the minutes, **ask if anyone has any changes to make** - people often take different ideas away from a meeting! You might also want to rotate the minute-taking, unless one person is really keen on it.