



Building a Sustainable Volunteer Management Network

Volunteer management networks are a great way of making new contacts and of gaining peer support. Yet, they can be time consuming to organise and run, meaning that over time they close down and disappear. Here's our advice on how you can make your network more sustainable.

Leadership and Governance

1. Spread the running of your network across a committee of a Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary, rather than placing it on an individual. This helps disperse the workload and means the network isn't at risk of folding if any one person leaves.
2. An enthusiastic and energetic committee is key to making your group sustainable. To help maintain with this, you should have clear guidance on how long they may each remain in post.
3. When it comes time to change your committee it's really important to have a transparent process in place. Our governance template can help with this [{LINK}](#).

Membership

1. Consider carefully who and where your members will come from. It might seem great to open it up to large area or a wide group of volunteer practitioners, but this could make the group difficult to manage.
2. Have clear guidelines about what is expected of your members - are you a networking group or do you want attendees to undertake work on behalf of the network?

Meetings

1. Early on you should decide on how many meetings you want to have a year. We like three, as it provides regular contact without creating too much work.
2. Rotate venues around your network, this will help keep people involved and spread any cost associated with refreshments.
3. Plan your dates in advance so they can be circulated early. Doing this will help give your network momentum and mean members always have another meeting to look forward to.
4. Involve your members in deciding what topics to cover and don't forget, always leave a space for your HVG update!
5. Consider bringing in speakers from outside your network. The HVG website contains details of other networks you might be able to call on for help, whilst our case studies page provides information on exciting work being undertaken in the sector.

Communication

1. Keeping people connected to your network is an important part of making it sustainable. To do this you'll need good communications, emails, newsletter and social media can all be helpful.
2. Maintaining an accurate mailing list is a really useful way of keeping in touch with people as are apps like [Slack](#)
3. It's often helpful to circulate minutes as soon after the meeting. As well as providing a review of what's happened it's also useful to include the date and location of the next event.
4. And please, don't forget to circulate the HVG update to your members!

What to do if you set up a network

If you set up a network please get in touch so that we can add your details to our networking page and make sure you're invited to the HVG Regional Networking Forum.